

Community Connections

University of Wollongong - Shoalhaven Campus Supplement

UOW's Shoalhaven Campus thrives on Inspiration, Consultation, Co-operation

By RENÉE CRIDDLE

Inspiration, community consultation and co-operation.

These are the key things that University of Wollongong Shoalhaven Campus Head Robbie Collins says the institution thrives on and structures itself around.

"This campus is not just about people coming in and going out...this place is of, with and for the community...it's all interconnected," Ms Collins said.

The Shoalhaven Campus is an integral part of the local community, constantly growing and expanding. The coming year is shaping up as another exciting one for the campus and will include a range of guest lectures from community and business leaders, the annual Careers Expo, on-going monthly film nights and the long anticipated opening of the Graduate School of Medicine.

"The campus has really opened up itself to the community as a venue ... local residents are involved in almost every event that takes place," said Ms Collins who has been in her role since May 2003.

"Next year's Shoalhaven Careers Expo will see almost 1000 high school and TAFE students on campus as well as a wide range of local business and organisations. I really believe it's one of the best careers events running. The 2005 Expo won a 'Stars of Shoalhaven' award for excellence from the Shoalhaven Area Consultative Committee after a nomination from the Mayor Cr Greg Watson.

"Community interaction is what makes this campus such a great place to work. Ray Cleary's initiative created a wonderful base that is steadily growing and reaching out to the region."

The Campus also recently launched 'Access University at the Shoalhaven Campus (AUSC)' - a 14 week part-time preparation program that has been specifically designed by the Wollongong University College (WUC) for students who want to enter university. The course prepares students for university by teaching skills related to note taking, essay writing, presentations and examinations; as well



UOW Shoalhaven Campus Head Robbie Collins.

as specific course content knowledge to help students succeed in both the AUSC and their future degree.

Ms Collins said 2007 will also see a focus on a new 'layer' of community events that will involve UOW's recent partnership with the Boyd Education Centre at Bundanon.

"The campus also exists to assist the community in bringing ideas to life. We have a very flexible, creative approach and we're always

open to new suggestions. We always encourage people with ideas to contact us."

Ms Collins says community support for the Graduate School of Medicine in particular has been 'phenomenal'.

"There has been a very strong sense of pride and ownership from the local and Indigenous community with this new school," she said. "I'm very much looking forward to what next year will bring."

Sue keeps Uni and community connected

By RENÉE CRIDDLE

Sue Rosskelly serves as a literal connection between the University of Wollongong and the Shoalhaven community.

She is the founder of 'Uni Connections' - part of the UOW Student Services program that aims to connect the Shoalhaven Campus with local high schools and the community.

Sue also teaches one day a week as a PE and careers teacher at Shoalhaven High.

Every week is a busy one, but Sue says that is exactly what she loves about her role.

"Yes it can be hectic, yes it can be full on - but I'm doing what I love," she said.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed watching Uni Connections grow and reach out to more and more students and the community. I am very excited that this model will extend to the Illawarra in 2007.

"The program is breaking down barriers in the community and helping people see university as a place to learn and be inspired by - not something to be afraid of."

Uni Connections holds a number of workshops and courses for high school students including Essay Writing for the HSC, Film and Drama Appreciation, Aboriginal Studies and



Sue Rosskelly

Careers in Accountancy workshops. A tutorial/homework assistance program gives UOW students the opportunity to work within specific schools. In the Shoalhaven, the program has also been involved in the organisation of other events such as the Shoalhaven Job Seekers Day and Careers Expo.

Sue, who was nominated for the 2006 Vice-Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Community Engagement, has also supported 'Girls Savvy' as part of Uni Connections - a program facilitated by the Premier's Department Office for Women that develops identity, goal setting and skills to help girls become financially independent.

Sue also hosts a Senior First Aid course and Indigenous Graduation, where all Indigenous graduating high school students are invited onto campus with their families, elders and community representatives to celebrate their achievements.

"There is a constant connection with the community through this program," said Sue. "We have lots of partnerships and relationships with schools and organisations and close networks with existing local, State and Federal government programs. The program is connecting the community and it's a very rewarding feeling to be part of that."

Upcoming events

Nov 29

Chinese Delegation visit

Dec 2

STAT entry test held at Shoalhaven Campus

Dec 4

Commencement of Shoalhaven Campus Summer Session

Dec 18

Shoalhaven Graduation Celebration

Jan 29

Students commence study at the Graduate School of Medicine

Jan 29

Students complete inaugural "Access University at Shoalhaven Campus" program

Feb 19

Orientation week on campus

Feb 26

Start of session for all other University students

For further information:
Contact Tracey Myers on
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WINNING PROJECTS BENEFIT COMMUNITY



Pictured left to right: MC Violet Green with Nowra High students Kadie Bloxome, Phoebe Williams and Sarha Galea, with former Assistant Principal Suzi Williams at the Year 12 Indigenous Graduation at UOW's Shoalhaven Campus. Ms Williams is now Principal at Henry Lawson High, Grenfell.

Graduation marks HSC milestone

Inspirational speeches from former graduates were among the highlights of this year's Shoalhaven Year 12 Indigenous Graduation hosted by the University of Wollongong's Shoalhaven Campus.

The graduation ceremony, now in its seventh year, recognises the efforts of Aboriginal students in reaching Year 12 – often against considerable odds.

This year 22 students representing Nowra, Bomaderry, Shoalhaven, Vincentia, Ulladalla and St John the Evangelist High School attended the ceremony, held on 19 September.

The ceremony was sponsored by the Federal Government through the Shoalhaven Area Consultative Committee (SACC) and Centrelink, and Shoalhaven City Council.

SACC Executive Officer Milton Lay, who coordinated the graduation, said it was an opportunity for friends, family and Aboriginal

elders to celebrate the students' success with representatives from their schools and political, civic and business leaders in the Shoalhaven.

"Completing Year 12 is a major milestone for indigenous students, and this ceremony is an excellent way to celebrate what they have achieved," he said. "It is also a good way for them to make contact with business and community leaders, and to learn more about the courses offered by UOW and TAFE at the Shoalhaven Campus.

"This year for the first time we had some of our past graduates back as speakers, to talk about their experiences after school – in further study at university and in careers like the Police Force. It was probably the most inspirational part of the evening."

Mr Lay said there remained a high drop-out rate from high school among indigenous students, that needed to be addressed.

"Encouraging indigenous students to stay to Year 12 is one of our great challenges, and for the past few years we have invited Year 10 and 11 students to the graduation ceremony so they can see what can be achieved if they stay on."

Nowra High School Principal Wayne Pryce says the graduation ceremony is "invaluable as a means of recognising the efforts of young Aboriginal students in education, and the success they enjoy".

"It's a fine example of the University, and schools working together to acknowledge outstanding outcomes for Aboriginal students," said Mr Pryce, whose school had four graduates this year.

"In many cases students acknowledged at this graduation ceremony are the first members of their family to complete the HSC. They are fine role models for other Aboriginal students, and fine role models for the community," he said.

Education empowers Mark to help others

When Mark King was studying for his Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting) degree at the University of Wollongong's Shoalhaven Campus, he said he hoped his studies would inspire other indigenous students, because education gives individuals the power to choose their path in life.

Mark was featured in a publication that profiled some of the Shoalhaven Campus' students and staff. In his profile, Mark said: "Education is empowerment – not power over someone else – but power over yourself it gives you the ability and knowledge to choose where you want to go in your life."

Mark knew where he wanted to go – into a position where he could help indigenous and non-indigenous people.

Three years later, Mark, 38, has graduated and found a job that fits that description perfectly.

He is the Executive Support Officer at Nowra's Oolong House – a rehabilitation facility for indigenous and non-indigenous men who want to regain their lives and manage problems linked to alcohol and other drugs.

Oolong House runs 16-week live-in programs for groups of men aged from 18 to help them overcome alcohol and drug addiction.



UOW Shoalhaven Bachelor of Commerce graduate Mark King, who works at Oolong House. Mark was the inaugural South Nowra Rotary Club Tertiary Indigenous Scholarship winner.

"It is great to be working in this area, even though I am working on the business side (rather than counselling) ... it is just so rewarding," said Mark. "I assist the Chief Executive in making sure the corporation is run properly. It's great to be able to put the skills I learned at University to good use in an organisation like this."

Mark said studying at the Shoalhaven Campus had been a "fantastic" experience.

"I really enjoyed my three years there. It was hard yakka, but fantastic," he said. "I really enjoyed the small, supportive learning environment.

"I had the chance to travel to Wollongong for a few subjects which allowed me to experience a bigger campus. It was good too, but I am very pleased that I was based at the Shoalhaven Campus throughout my degree.

"And it's good to be working in the Shoalhaven and being able to put some thing back into the community."

In 2005 Mark was the inaugural recipient of the South Nowra Rotary Club Tertiary Indigenous Scholarship, a cash award which he said was a great help in meeting his expenses in his final year.

Innovation is the name of the game

By RENÉE CRIDDLE

Shoalhaven Innovation Inc was created by the community, for the community. Executive Officer at UOW's Shoalhaven Campus and one of four founding directors of Shoalhaven Innovation, Laurie Stevenson, says there is a special sense of pride that comes from knowing you have helped a community member get their invention from the kitchen table or garden shed out into the marketplace.

After identifying a lack of support and advice for Shoalhaven innovators, the four team members decided in 2004 to create a service to help community members expand on their ideas and launch their innovation.

Shoalhaven Innovation comprises a group of professionals working in innovation-related fields who volunteer their time, knowledge and experience to assist the growth of innovation in the Shoalhaven region.

"Historically, the Shoalhaven economy has relied heavily on agriculture, manufacturing, defence, retail trade and tourism. Increasingly, regional areas are now depending upon innovation to remain competitive in a global marketplace.

"The Shoalhaven Innovation group is helping to 'grow' innovators and their inventions and acts as a service inventors can utilise for guidance in understanding the process of innovation, assistance with business planning and presentation skills, and access to information seminars."



Shoalhaven Campus Executive Officer Laurie Stevenson

Mr Stevenson said he is benefiting from the experience and skills of the other three founding directors in his team which include innovator Mark Freeman, Shoalhaven Business Development Manager for Illawarra ITeC Business Enterprise Centre Lynette Kearney and Shoalhaven Area Consultative Committee Small Business Field Officer Lyn Eckersley.

"The varied backgrounds, experience and professional activities of the team have produced a broad, multidisciplinary perspective with which to assist local inventors on the innovation journey.

"It is also a wonderful opportunity to contribute towards the University of Wollongong's commitment to community engagement with the Shoalhaven."

It's a role Mr Stevenson says he gains 'immense fulfilment' from. He enjoys watching local inventors take their first entrepreneurial steps and glimpsing a small sample of the talented pool of residents living in the Shoalhaven.

The association has already provided assistance to over 10 Shoalhaven-based inventors in the process of commercialising their innovations. The group has also hosted two major innovation forums and contributed to the Australian Innovation Festival in 05 and 06.

MEDICAL SCHOOL READY FOR FIRST STUDENTS

Shoalhaven Head passionate about keeping in practice

It isn't hard to see that Associate Professor Lyndal Parker-Newlyn has a passion for General Practice medicine.

Along with her official positions as Associate Director, Division of Teaching and Shoalhaven Campus Head of the UOW Graduate School of Medicine (GSM), Chair of the Shoalhaven Division of General Practice, board member of the NSW Rural Doctors Network and Deputy Chair of the Australian Rural and Remote Workforce Agencies Group, she still finds time to work as a General Practitioner one day a fortnight.

In fact, Professor Parker-Newlyn sees that day "at the coalface" each week at Nowra's Worrige Street Medical Centre as a key element of her new role at the GSM.

"I love rural General Practice, otherwise I wouldn't be doing it and encouraging others to do it," she said. "And I feel it is very important from a teaching point of view to continue to work as a GP, to stay abreast of the latest developments. It's good for students to be taught by people who are still working as doctors."

In her role with the NSW Rural Doctors Network Professor Parker-Newlyn is acutely conscious of the need to address the shortage of doctors in regional, rural and remote communities. She is confident the GSM's focus on selecting students with rural and regional connections and then fostering those links throughout their training will have long-term benefits.

"We need more doctors with an interest in working in rural areas, so I hope the GSM's approach will help address the problem across the board – not just in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven," she said.

"We need to make our students feel comfortable in rural practices and rural hospitals, and comfortable in the community," she said. "It is likely people will start encountering our students in hospitals and clinics in the coming years. I hope they make the students feel welcome – and encourage them to stay on and practice medicine here."

Professor Parker-Newlyn chairs the GSM admissions committee and is excited by the quality of people interested in studying at the medical school.

Interviews are now complete, offers have been made, and UOW's first Medical students will start at the Shoalhaven and Wollongong campuses on 29 January.

Strong support from Illawarra and Shoalhaven doctors had been crucial to establishment of the GSM, Professor Parker-Newlyn said. "Doctors in this area have a very strong interest in the medical school because they see that it will train the people who will eventually replace them as doctors in this community. They want to know that they will be replaced with quality doctors, and ones who will love this community as much as they do."

Of the GSM's 80 students in each year, 56 will be based at UOW's Wollongong Campus and 24 in the Shoalhaven.

Professor Parker-Newlyn believes the smaller group at the Shoalhaven Campus will have certain advantages.

"We have a strong commitment to ensuring that the students based in the Shoalhaven have equity with the Wollongong-based students, but I believe they will actually benefit from being part of a smaller, nurturing cohort of students," she



said. "And the students will get to live in the Shoalhaven, which is such a beautiful part of the world."

She also believes the arrival of medical students will help lift the profile of UOW's Shoalhaven Campus in the region.

"Shoalhaven Campus provides a great level of education, although it hasn't always received the kudos it deserves in the past," she said. "It

Head of the Graduate School of Medicine at Shoalhaven Campus Associate Professor Lyndal Parker-Newlyn.

has been turning out very good graduates for years but people in the community don't necessarily know that. Everyone gets sick, so when we start producing doctors there will be a wider appreciation of what the Shoalhaven Campus offers."

Research Centre aims to be a big fish



Shoalhaven Marine and Freshwater Centre Director Associate Professor Ron West in front of the new building the Centre shares with the Graduate School of Medicine.

The Shoalhaven Marine and Freshwater Centre is just getting off the ground at the Shoalhaven Campus - but with ongoing community support it could soon be up there with the big fish.

The marine research centre is the first of its kind in the region and was created through Federal Government funding of \$660,000. It is

run by the University of Wollongong in partnership with Shoalhaven City Council and incorporates a laboratory for research and industry training purposes, office space for staff and students, as well as indoor tank and aquarium facilities and outdoor aquaculture ponds.

The new Centre will undertake a range of research activities, in association with

government and industry, and provide facilities for postgraduate and undergraduate teaching.

Aquaculture is the cultivation of aquatic animals and plants - particularly fish, shellfish, and seaweed in natural or controlled marine or freshwater environments.

It is one of the fastest growing food-related industries in the world, however it is relatively under-developed in NSW. While the Centre's future is looking bright, the key to its overall success will be the ongoing development of partnerships and linkages in the region as well as adequate funding.

"I envisage this Centre acting as a very valuable link between community, government and industry," said Centre Director Associate Professor Ron West from UOW's School of Biological Sciences. "I think it will bring people and organisations together. We have already developed a number of strong international and regional linkages.

"Eventually I hope the Centre will exist as the 'hub' for a variety of research activities taking place in the region. It will be vital in monitoring over 50 local estuaries, their condition and their sustainability."

The focus of this research will be the coast and near-shore environments.

Fish biology, fisheries and aquaculture will be major themes for the research centre.

Professor West said there was an enormous scope and need for more freshwater aquaculture research in this region, in a whole range of topics (husbandry, production, diseases, water quality) and species (silver perch, Australian bass, barramundi, Murray

cod, perch, black bream, etc).

Marine species currently under culture in NSW waters include oysters, mussels and some finfish, such as snapper and mullet, but potential exists to culture a number of other marine species such as abalone, scallops, pearl oysters and several fishes.

"Further research is needed to better understand the biology of our estuaries and coasts, and to provide the basis for the measurement and monitoring of human impacts on these vital ecosystems. Urgent work is also required on threatened aquatic species in the region," Professor West said.

Future goals include being able to offer marine science subjects through the Centre at the Shoalhaven Campus, for both postgraduate and undergraduate students.

The Centre will also provide an infrastructure for research and teaching of a large range of other topics such as general aquatic biology, aquatic organisms, reproductive biology, growth studies and the evaluation of environmental variables.

It will also allow for more urgent research into threatened freshwater species, conservation management and fish stocking in general.

While the Centre's future is looking bright, the key to its overall success will be the ongoing development of partnerships and linkages in the region.

"The scope of our coastal and marine work will largely depend on funding from key partners and industry. With adequate support, I believe the Centre will be a real commodity for the community," Professor West said.

Opening up beautiful Bundanon

Partnership with Boyd Centre

By RENÉE CRIDDLE

The Arthur and Yvonne Boyd Education Centre and Bundanon property are world renowned...yet many Shoalhaven students are yet to experience this unique cultural and environmental asset.

This is changing with a new partnership that has been formed between the University of Wollongong Shoalhaven Campus and the Boyd Education Centre – the first collaboration of its kind in the world.

An art/education project launched in 2006 and supported with a Community Engagement Grant, involves Graduate Diploma of Education (Primary) students at the Shoalhaven Campus being given the opportunity to experience the creative process in campus-based master classes and 'retreats' led by local artists at the beautiful and tranquil Bundanon.

The Bundanon properties and collections were a gift to the nation from celebrated painter Arthur Boyd and his wife Yvonne, born out of Arthur's often stated belief that 'you can't own a landscape' and the deeply felt wish that others might draw inspiration from Bundanon as he did.

The Bundanon Trust was established in March 1993 to develop Bundanon as a 'living arts centre' according to the principles agreed with the Boyds, creating a platform for a cultural institution unique in Australia and the world. The centre sees over 11,000 visitors through its doors each year.

The collaboration with UOW is an initiative of the Australasian Occupational Science Centre (AOSC) based at the Shoalhaven Campus and run by Dr Alison Wicks.

"It is such a wonderful opportunity for the students to experience this remarkably valuable community resource," she said.

"When the program started in July this year, none of the students were artists so initially many of them were reluctant to explore their own creativity but by the end of the workshop they all really let go of their inhibitions and produced some fantastic art."

Dr Wicks said the ongoing collaboration not only enriches the students' lives, but also the Shoalhaven community.

"This cohort of students has come away from this experience infused with an understanding of creativity. They are ready to impart their new knowledge to the children they will be teaching in the local area. So our schools and school students will also benefit from this partnership between Bundanon and the Campus."

"As well as this, Bundanon as a Shoalhaven resource will flourish and employ more artists...and its international reputation will continue to draw more overseas students – giving our campus a distinct edge."

Dr Wicks and her colleagues are already planning another project with Bundanon, which involves developing Australia's first Graduate Diploma of Education (Secondary) in Creative and Performing Arts – a program she says would attract international students



Bundanon Visits Officer and UOW graduate Sarah Low, with the property's beautiful views over the Shoalhaven River in the background.

and give the Shoalhaven Campus a distinct edge. However, the future of the program is very dependent on funding.

"Most funding partners want to be able to see the economic outcome of a project within six months. But this collaboration has long-term social and cultural benefits and its significance can't really be valued in monetary terms."

Bundanon's Education & Public Programs Manager Simone de Haan said he sees the program as 'unique within the Australian context'.

"Local students have the opportunity to work in an artistic environment of international quality that is dedicated to creativity and inspired by the life and work of one of Australia's greatest artists," he said.

Bundanon Visits Officer Sarah Low, a UOW Creative Arts graduate, says her experience with the project has been inspirational.

"Watching the students realise their own artistic potential was fantastic," she said. "They really came out of their shells and pushed the boundaries

with their art.

"It is a really unique program and an experience most students would never have. I think it's wonderful that an artistic retreat like this can actually be part of a university educational program in this region."

For more information on Bundanon visit: <http://www.bundanon.com.au/>

Community supports sends AOSC global



By RENÉE CRIDDLE

The Australasian Occupational Science Centre (AOSC) was launched just over a year ago...but the world has already taken notice.

Based at the Shoalhaven Campus, the Centre has already proven itself a valuable community resource and is spreading the word about the importance of doing what you need and want to do in order to stay healthy and satisfied with life.

AOSC is the world's first occupational science education and research centre. Occupational science is a new academic discipline which studies occupation, the everyday things people do to occupy their time, and the many social, cultural and political influences that shape occupation on a daily basis. It is particularly concerned with the relationship between what people do and their health and well being.

"The work of the Centre is focused on the community," said AOSC Director Dr Alison Wicks.

Dr Alison Wicks at the Shoalhaven Campus, pictured in front of a mural that students completed as part of the art partnership between the Boyd Education Centre at Bundanon and UOW.

The Centre's first project – 'Do It Now' – was a community education program, available at no cost to Shoalhaven residents over the age of 55. The aim of the program was to inform people about the importance of participating in meaningful occupations for a healthy and satisfying retirement. The program attracted over 170 local residents, some planning to retire from work and others who were already retired. This project was supported by funding from the Australian Government's Regional Partnership program.

Dr Wicks also says that it was support and funding from individuals and organisations in the local community that helped the Centre become established in the first place.

"The Centre had been a dream of mine for many years, so it was very exciting to receive such an overwhelmingly positive response from the community."

Dr Wicks said the highlight of her time as Director of the AOSC so far was hosting the first ever international Occupational Science 'Think Tank' in July this year. Leading occupational scientists from the USA, Canada, Japan, UK, Sweden, Taiwan, The Netherlands, South Africa, New

Zealand and Australia met at the Shoalhaven Campus to collaborate and discuss research and future occupational science agendas. The event was such a success that Dr Wicks is spending the first four months of 2007 in Los Angeles at the University of Southern California organising the second international 'Think Tank'.

"It's wonderful to see something that started in the Shoalhaven turn global," she said. "The great thing is that the local community has supported this Centre and is now benefiting from it... as are many other people around the world."

Dr Wicks is now seeking funds and support for a future AOSC project which will focus on the younger generation. The new project will involve students at Shoalhaven Campus developing a resource kit so parents can find easy and cost effective ways of playing with their children.

"When we are young, play is our primary means of learning and understanding. In our next project, we are going to look at how parents can enhance their children's play experience by using ordinary, everyday objects around us."