



**Southern
Cross
University**

Southern Cross Matters



June Edition 2026

From the Vice-Chancellor

Dear Colleagues,

As I write this introduction, we have reached the winter solstice, the whales have reappeared in our part of the world as they navigate north along our magnificent coastline and we have just completed term 2 teaching.

So far in 2026, we have seen a continuation of the strong levels of student academic success and retention that we have been working so hard to support, and I'm heartened to see that demand for commencing places in Term 3 is robust indeed.

Over the past six months, so many colleagues have worked incredibly hard to ensure that major transitions like our move from "classic" blackboard to Ultra have occurred on time and to a high standard, and we know that our students are really seeing the benefits flow from this.

Similarly, even in a challenging environment, our researchers continue to be awarded significant competitive grants, publish to the highest standard and build new and deeper relationships with industry partners.

This can do attitude, coupled with a genuinely deep seated focus on excellence, pervades Southern Cross University and bit by bit, week by week, is strengthening our institution even in times of rapid change and volatility.

It seems to me that this will become an even more important aspect of our collective approach in future, and that this will help us move with urgency and impact when we elect a course of action. A great example of this highlighted in this month's edition relates to our new, very substantially streamlined TAFE pathways.

While it is true that it has always been possible for a potential student with a TAFE qualification both to seek a place and to seek credit for prior learning, we have now found ways to generate clarity and certainty both in relation to the availability of a place and the availability of credit – before an application is even lodged.

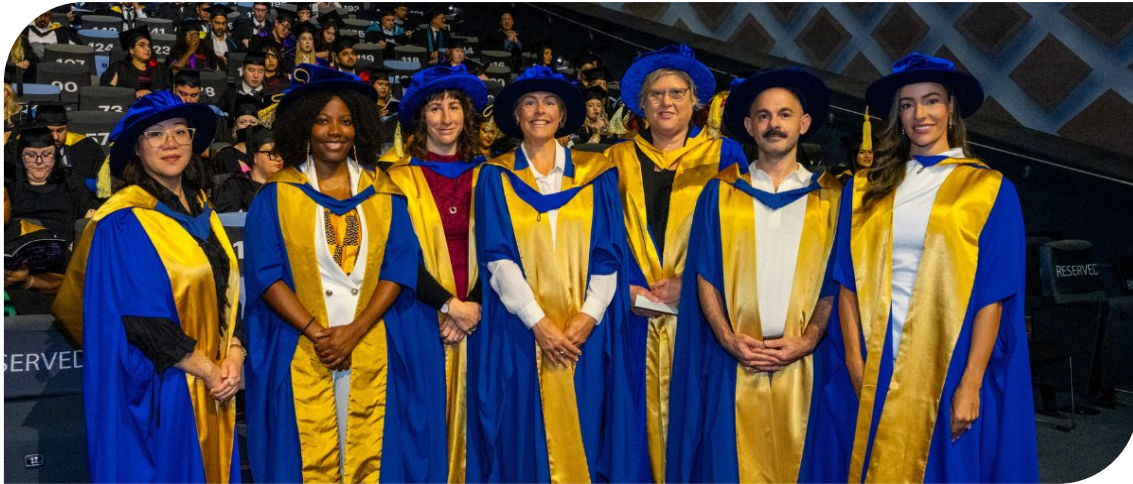
Whilst this appears simple at the surface (and indeed is, from a prospective student perspective), it took enormous effort to bring to life – and this work was done rapidly and to a very high standard.

So many people at SCU have fantastic ideas about how we can change and innovate to drive better journeys for our students and greater impact from our research. We see the fruit borne of these ideas in every month's edition of Southern Cross Matters and I hope that the June edition serves as a powerful reminder of how we can harness creativity to really live our purpose in the service of our community.

I hope you enjoy June's Southern Cross Matters and I look forward to your continued feedback about topics and stories of interest for future editions.

Warmest wishes,

Tyrone



Researchers turned graduates: our newest PhD and Masters alumni

Celebrating our Sydney graduates

Southern Cross University's Sydney graduation ceremonies celebrated the achievements of the Class of 2026 and the culmination of years of hard work and dedication. Among the graduates were researchers making meaningful contributions to health and wellbeing, from improving support for people living with mental illness to exploring new approaches to chronic pain management. Congratulations to all our graduates, we look forward to seeing the impact you'll make in your communities, industries and beyond.

[Find out more](#)



Southern Cross University student Vicky Santalla

TAFE graduates to step straight into second year

Southern Cross University has announced a streamlined TAFE-to-university pathway model that guarantees eligible students with approved NSW or Queensland TAFE diplomas a full year of credit into selected undergraduate degrees, making the transition to university faster and more affordable. This initiative aligns with the Australian Tertiary Education Commission's (ATEC) efforts to improve consistency in credit recognition across the tertiary education sector.

[Find out more](#)

Spotlight stories



Ebola has returned to global headlines following a new outbreak of the Bundibugyo strain in parts of Africa. Southern Cross University's Dr Peter Bai James explains how Ebola spreads, what's driving the current spread, why this outbreak is concerning, and whether Australia is at risk.

[Find out more](#)



Southern Cross University has played a key role in developing Australia's first national research, development and innovation strategy for certified organic horticulture. The goal of the new sector roadmap is to double the value and impact of certified organic horticulture production in Australia by 2035.

[Find out more](#)



Southern Cross University Chancellor Sandra McPhee AM and Bonnie Boezeman AO recently hosted the *Women in Healthcare Leadership Luncheon*. The event brought together healthcare leaders, researchers and industry partners with a shared focus on supporting women in leadership and strengthening the future of healthcare.

[Find out more](#)



The launch of the Southern Cross University and KLE Academy of Higher Education and Research (KAHER) *Research and Education Hub* in Belagavi, India, marks a major milestone in the partnership between the two institutions, strengthening collaboration in research, workforce development and global engagement.

[Find out more](#)

Excellence in action



Master of Osteopathic Medicine student Benjamin Guse, the 2025 Male Student-Athlete of the Year, with Swathi Kartik, Senior Manager – Stay Well, at the 2025 UniSport Australia Sports Awards in Melbourne.

Osteopathy student Ben Guse, named 2025 Male Student-Athlete of the Year. After a strong season highlighted by gold medals at the FISU World University Games and UniSport Nationals, multiple personal bests, and balancing elite sport with study, this award is just the cherry on top. [Congratulations!](#)

A legacy that leads: nursing excellence in the spotlight. The Ena Williams Symposium and International Nurses Day Awards celebrated the legacy of a trailblazer and the nurses carrying it forward. [View the winners.](#)

Labour of love, award-winning impact. Bachelor of Midwifery alumna Nicole Edwards has received the 2026 Our Kids Early Career Midwife of the Year Award for supporting women through pregnancy, birth and beyond. [Read about her crowning achievement.](#)

Getting her hands dirty. Science student Melita Ross is heading to China to represent Australia in an international soil judging competition. She'll join students from 23 countries analysing and classifying soils in real-world conditions. [Uncover more.](#)

A closer look at coastal health. Backed by an NSW Environmental Trust grant, researchers are working with Gumbaynggirr partners to monitor estuary health on the NSW Mid North Coast. [Read here.](#)

Congratulations on King's Birthday Honours.

- **Ms Michele McDonald OAM** was recognised for service to education. Michele is a current member of the Faculty of Education Academic Advisory Board and has held senior Catholic education leadership roles across the Diocese of Lismore and Coffs Harbour.

- **Mr Stephan Bruce Schnierer OAM** was recognised for service to fisheries management, particularly Indigenous fisheries and environmental advisory work. Stephan has a long association with Southern Cross University, starting as a lecturer in 1985 and most recently serving as Chair of the University's Aboriginal Advisory Committee.

- **Professor Emerita Tracey Arlene Bunda AM** was recognised for significant service to tertiary education, research, and the Indigenous community. Tracey has historic links with the University, serving as a Board Member of the Faculty of Education in 2020.

University updates



Research reaching far and wide. Together with News Corp, our 'Research, explained' campaign is gaining strong traction, with interest extending beyond Australia, including the United States. From [marine cloud brightening](#) to [black rice](#), we are shining a spotlight on a number of our researchers, with more to come, each story highlighting clear, credible work with real-world impact and making the impact of SCU research more visible and understood. You can help extend the reach by liking and sharing our LinkedIn posts.

[Explore more.](#)

Calls for law reform. With drug driving reforms back in the news, Dean of Law Professor David Heilpern's long-running call for change is timelier than ever. David argues that road safety laws should focus on impairment, not simply the presence of THC. [Listen now.](#)

Whale conservation and hands-on training. A new marine research station on the NSW North Coast will strengthen conservation research and provide hands-on training to help protect Australia's marine life. [Learn more.](#)

Pushing the right buttons. We are proud to be the Official University Partner of The FUSE Cup – International School Esports, helping support innovative, inclusive learning experiences for young people through esports. [More info loading.](#)

Reefs without borders. New research shows coral offspring can travel 100km or more, linking reefs across the Pacific. These long-distance connections help reefs recover and adapt. [Read more.](#)

Taking research to the field at Primex. It was exciting to spend three days in Lismore at Primex Field Days, showcasing our research to more than 1,200 school students and 30,000 visitors. [Learn more about our partnership.](#)

Waste less, cook smarter. In this article for The Conversation, Dr Emily Burch breaks down how commonly discarded ingredients can become soups, stocks and everyday meals. [Read more.](#)

Our Media Centre. Want to know what else we've been up to? [Check our Media Centre.](#)

People and culture



Celebrating our people: Katie McDonough

At Southern Cross University, a career is more than a job. For Katie McDonough it's clear she loves what she does. As Organisational Development Coordinator, she plays a key role in supporting the delivery of impactful, high-quality work across the University.

For Katie, it's not just the rewarding and challenging work that stands out, it's the people who have made her time at Southern Cross University so meaningful. [Watch her story.](#)

Welcome to those who've joined Southern Cross University recently:

Dr Carlos Cardoso Kucera, Lecturer
Natalie Gardam, Senior Manager, Professional Experience
Dr Rose Mutuota, Lecturer
Leighann Ness Wilson, Lecturer
Associate Professor Craig Deed, Lecturer
Professor Camille Cronin, Professor
Dr Tyler Henderson, Lecturer
Dr Yingying Sun, Senior Technical Officer, Microbiology and Biosafety
Lucy Jellema, Educational Designer
Rachel Cleary, Administrative Officer
Sophie Fischer, Events Officer
Dane September, Technical Officer, Audio Visual
Jazz Cameron, Events Officer

Karen McMillan, Manager, Finance Business Partners
Kirsty Palmer, Senior Financial Analyst, Student Revenue and Reporting
Louise McKenzie, Transaction Services Officer (Payments)
Alexandra Costigan, People and Culture Business Partner
Christie Curran, People Services Specialist
Ainsley Lim, Cyber Resilience Coordinator
Tess Wilson, Student Support Project Coordinator (Safety and Well-being)
Jaime Pollard, Manager, Counselling & Safety
Hasini Balage, First Year Advisor

Have some news to share?

If you have some news or a story idea you'd like to share in an upcoming edition of SCU Matters, email us at content@scu.edu.au.

