



**Southern
Cross
University**

Southern Cross Matters



September Edition 2026

From the Vice-Chancellor

Dear Colleagues,

Much of what universities do is future-focused.

We educate students whose impact is still unfolding, pursue research that expands understanding, and invest in people, partnerships and places that will shape our communities for years to come.

I was reminded of this recently while attending the first of our donor recognition events in Lismore. Bringing together donors, scholarship recipients, staff and community partners created an opportunity to reflect on what support really means. Hearing directly from students about the opportunities that support has made possible, and from donors about their commitment to helping others succeed, was a powerful reminder that behind every scholarship, program and initiative sits a shared belief in the transformative role education can play in people's lives.

What struck me most was the sense of connection in the room. While each person had arrived there by a different path, they were united by a commitment to creating opportunities for others and strengthening the communities we serve. It was a meaningful reminder that the impact of a university extends well beyond our campuses through the graduates, research, partnerships and community contributions that grow from these investments.

As I read through this month's edition of Southern Cross Matters, I found myself reflecting on that same idea in different ways. Our [Student Experience Survey results](#) reflect years of collective effort to enhance learning, support and student success, and I want to acknowledge and thank everyone who has contributed to this achievement. Results like these do not happen by chance. They are the product of thousands of interactions,

moments of support and learning experiences that staff across the University create every day. The same commitment to helping others succeed is evident in many of the stories featured throughout these pages.

You'll also notice that the image accompanying this edition is a little different from usual. In just over a week, we will break ground on the Southern Cross Regional Athletics Facility at our Lismore campus. It represents an investment in future generations and in the communities we serve, creating new opportunities for schools, athletes, clubs and families across our region. While construction is only beginning, it is exciting to consider the role the facility will play in supporting participation, aspiration and community connection for many years to come. There is something special about standing in a place just before it changes, and I suspect many of us will look back with interest on what this corner of our campus looked like before the first sod was turned.

Perhaps that is the reflection I take from this month. Some of the most meaningful moments in a university are those that reconnect us with why we do what we do. They reinforce the power of education to change lives, the generosity that exists within our community, and the remarkable things that become possible when people choose to invest in one another.

I hope you enjoy this month's edition.

Warm wishes,

Tyrone

Construction is about to start on our new athletics track. So - what's your Olympic event?

Pick the one that matches you best, and see how the team stacks up.

On your marks, get set, go!



Vice-Chancellor Professor Tyrone Carlin and Professor Scott Johnston with Elders Aunty Elizabeth Smith and Aunty Babani Robyn.

Celebrating scale and success of Clarence River Guardians

It's been nearly a year since we coordinated hundreds of citizen scientists sampling from more than 22,600 square kilometres of the Clarence River catchment. Results are now - live but they're only the beginning of what we're building together.

[Find out more](#)



Professor Rowland Cobbald

Behold, take a tour of our new veterinary science facilities from wherever you are

For those who may not have had the chance to visit the Lismore campus, a free tour of the Vet Facility (no pool car booking required). Also, enjoy the staff dogs featured throughout!

Take a tour



Off to new heights... The next generation of nurses celebrated their final day with bright scrubs and big energy. Beautifully said by course coordinator Nicole Graham: "We're incredibly proud of the compassionate and capable nurses they've become, and look forward to seeing the positive impact they'll have throughout their nursing careers."

Spotlight stories



Curriculum innovation is critical to helping more students access and succeed at university. This perspective is detailed in Professor Jim Nyland's book, launched at the recent ACSES conference.

[Find out more](#)



The Southern Cross Model just won a national ACSES award recognising its impact on student success and equity outcomes. This impact is seen not across some equity groups – it's all groups.

[Find out more](#)



From the launch of a national whitepaper at Parliament House, to the publication of new research built on a substantial body of work, this month Open Goals Lab has been... kicking goals. Pun intended.

[Find out more](#)



Congratulations to Rachel Scicluna, winner of the 2026 Graduate Researcher One Minute Reel Competition for her explanation of the impact of pilates on cancer patients. All entries excellent!

[Find out more](#)

Excellence in action



Recently, we opened the Gold Coast Esports Hub, extending a thriving online community, supporting research, and having fun. Gaming can combat isolation and create community, and it's wonderful to see such positive reaction [to the news](#).

Deepening national marine research ties. We're the first regional institution to join the Sydney Institute of Marine Science as an associate member. [Dive in.](#)

Centre for Children & Young People co-chair global congress. More than 1,000 delegates joined Professor Lyn McPherson for the 2026 IPSCAN Congress. [Read on.](#)

University updates



Packed house for alumni leadership lunch. MBA alumna Bojana Zivec summed it up: "I loved every bit of it. The panellists were so human and authentic, sharing practical experiences, applied knowledge and lessons that genuinely resonated with me... Very proud to be a Southern Cross University alumna and to remain connected and involved in this wonderful community."

Health pop-up for Coffs campus and community. Student Naturopathy Clinic is offering personalised nutrition and lifestyle advice until the end of October. [Bookings open now.](#)

Brightening up Parliament. Marine cloud research on the agenda as politicians and stakeholders relaunched the Parliamentary Friends of the Great Barrier Reef. [Roll call.](#)

Old name takes on new faces. Partnership + hands-on learning take pride of place as Norco announce placements for eight new allied health students. [Big smiles on Day One.](#)

Work in the wild. Snapshot of unfiltered commentary on this nature curriculum research project. Can impact be both '100% attendance' and 'I get to skip school?' [Watch to the end.](#)

People and culture



Celebrating our people: Evan Crandon

For Evan Crandon, Director of Future Students and Outreach, one of the most rewarding parts of working at Southern Cross is knowing your voice matters.

It's a place where people are supported to grow, take the next step in their careers, and make a meaningful impact on students and communities.

From career development opportunities and supportive leadership to a strong sense of belonging and a lifestyle that's hard to beat, it's all part of what makes Southern Cross a great place to work. [Watch Evan's story.](#)

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

Dr Tafadzwa Mavhunga, Lecturer,
Faculty of Health
Dr Stuart Hunter, Associate Professor,
Faculty of Science and Engineering
Sam Hall, Coordinator, Library Services
Dr Anne Hardy, Professor, Office of the
PVC (Academic Innovation)
Vickki King, Student Management
Officer, Indigenous Australian Student
Services
Rachel Christie, Senior Manager,
Governance Services
Corey Thompson, Contractor Safety &
Authorisation Lead, Property Services
Eashan Deshmukh, AI Engineer, Digital
Delivery and Innovation

Nina Krohmer, Procurement Services
Officer, Financial Performance
Maddy Cheater, Technical Officer,
Laboratory Operations
Karl Walker-Griffiths, Platform Engineer,
Technology Platforms
Shayla Thompson, Student Success
Officer, Stay Well Unit
Elyssa Hudson, Counsellor, Stay Well
Unit
Zach Hyatt, Student Administration
Officer, Student Administration Services
Maddy Daley, Student Administration
Officer, Student Administration Services
Tim Jeffery, Student Administration
Officer, Student Administration Services

Want to read more news, or share some?

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

To read more than we could fit into this newsletter, please check out [our news](#).

If you're interested in both reading and sharing, [LinkedIn](#) is a great place to do both.

For previous editions of Southern Cross Matters, [view the archive](#).

