



**Southern
Cross
University**

Southern Cross Matters



August Edition 2026

From the Vice-Chancellor

Dear Colleagues,

Universities often mark progress through milestones – a new discipline, a major grant, student outcomes.

I have been thinking recently how much of the progress we make as an institution is built in less conspicuous ways. It accumulates through decisions made well, teaching refined from one term to the next, relationships patiently developed, ideas tested and improved, and colleagues consistently doing the everyday work that moves the University forward.

Every so often, we get an opportunity to see the cumulative effect of that work more clearly.

The latest [whole-of-University data on the Southern Cross Model](#) is one such moment. Five years after its introduction, we can now look across a substantial body of evidence and see what has happened as the Model has been embedded, tested and refined. Stronger student success, lower attrition and improved satisfaction are important results in themselves, but they also represent thousands of individual interactions, decisions and improvements made over a sustained period of time.

I see something similar in the growing contribution our academics are making to conversations beyond the University. In recent weeks alone, Southern Cross University expertise has been informing discussions across areas as diverse as research, health, education, public policy and the environment.

Not every interview, briefing, expert comment, industry conversation or contribution to public debate will become a story in Southern Cross Matters. But collectively, these moments matter. They build understanding of who we are, extend the reach of our expertise and strengthen the reputation of the University.

Perhaps that is the broader reflection I take from this month. Progress is not always a single transformative moment. More often, it is the compound effect of good work, undertaken consistently, becoming visible over time.

There is plenty in this edition that offers a glimpse of that work, and a great deal more happening every day across Southern Cross University that sits behind it. I hope you enjoy August's Southern Cross Matters.

Warmest wishes,

Tyrone



L to R: Dr Stephen Quarrell (Plant Health Australia), Professor Andre Drenth (UQ), Kelly Kornacki (AgriFutures Australia), Dr Jamin Forbes (AgriFutures Australia), Rebecca Zentveld (Australian Grown Coffee Association), Professor Tobias Kretzschmar (Southern Cross University), Dr Terry Rose (Southern Cross University).

Australia's largest-ever coffee research program

Australians drink two billion cups of coffee a year, but almost none of it is actually grown here. Now, backed by significant funding and key partners including AgriFutures Australia and Plant Health Australia, we're leading a national push to change that.

[Find out more](#)



2026 Open Day event on the Gold Coast campus

Open Days wrap up with record excitement

Our 2026 Open Days have wrapped up, with a huge thank you to the staff and students who helped make them a success. Their energy and support created a welcoming experience for future students and their families, showcasing the best of life at Southern Cross University.

[Find out more](#)

Spotlight stories



This student placement is transforming communities. What began as a short exchange in the Solomon Islands is evolving into a partnership connecting students, researchers, healthcare professionals and athletes.

[Find out more](#)



A fishing net is woven by many hands. A new study by researchers from Gnibi College, Faculty of Science and Engineering and Centre for Teaching and Learning argues the process is far more significant than the net itself.

[Find out more](#)



A simple idea is changing what a long hospital stay looks like for patients on the medical ward at Macksville Hospital. Third-year Occupational Therapy student Eli Vaughan, currently on placement, helped build it from scratch.

[Find out more](#)



A deepening partnership between Southern Cross University and Summerland Bank is growing the region's next generation of business leaders by opening career and experience doors for Bachelor of Business students.

[Find out more](#)

Excellence in action



Graduate Researcher, Rebecca Woodrow, taking water samples from the new bioreactor at Sandy Beach.

Research partnership nets results. Serious nutrient runoff issues are being tackled by National Marine Science Centre researchers and local partners. [The fix is remarkable.](#)

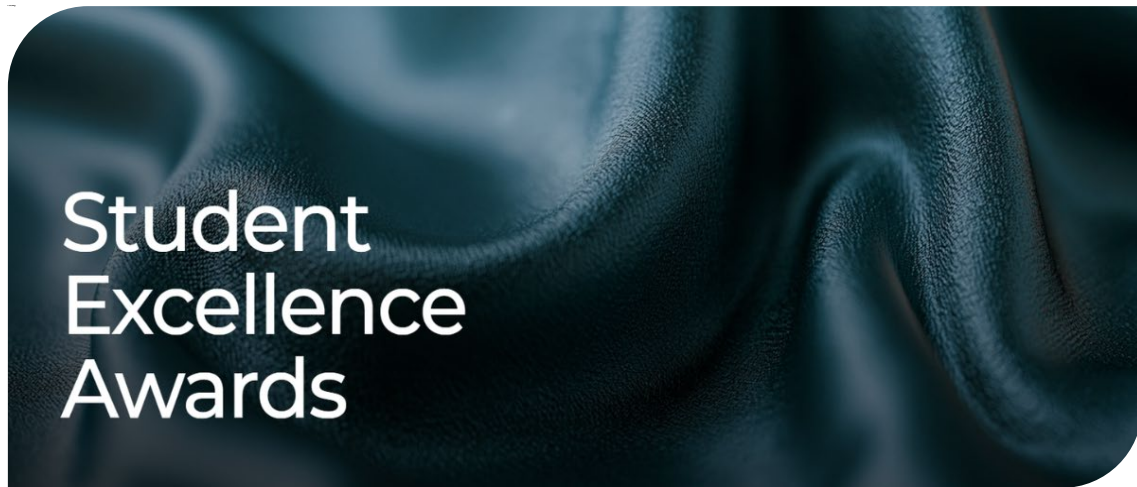
Five years into the Southern Cross Model. The university now has whole-of-institution data on how the radical approach to curriculum is performing. [The data tells a clear story.](#)

Prestigious Maitri Scholarship announced. Indian plant scientist Bhagat Singh grew up in a farming family, and that experience is shaping the PhD he's embarking on. [More here.](#)

It's official: dung beetles are small but mighty. A study set out to measure their direct effect on greenhouse gas emissions from cattle manure. [Here are the world-first results.](#)

NAIDOC celebrations. We celebrated 50 years of deadly in higher education at events across campuses, with free community performances by Christine Anu. [View the gallery.](#)

University updates



Call for Student Excellence Award submissions. Know a student who's making a significant contribution to student experience or community impact? [Nominate them here.](#)

National Student Safety Survey is coming. Eligible students will be invited to participate later this year and share their experiences and perspectives. [Find out more.](#)

International Day of Yoga. The National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine and Consulate General of India delivered accessible, chair-based yoga at Crowley Care. [Watch video.](#)

... And for RUN Awards submissions. The [Regional Universities Network Learning and Teaching Awards](#) are open. Have a practice you're proud of? Submit to ctl@scu.edu.au.

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

People and culture



Celebrating our people: Dr Jena Buchan

When Jena Buchan isn't researching or teaching exercise science students at Southern Cross University, you'll usually find her on the sun-kissed beaches of the Gold Coast - playing volleyball, surfing the waves or walking her dogs.

For someone who has dedicated her career to enhancing the physical and psychosocial wellbeing of others, it's equally important that she invests in her own.

At Southern Cross University, Jena finds the balance she needs to make a real difference for our students, communities and her career. [Watch her story and find out how.](#)

Start fresh with Flare Benefits. A new financial year is a good excuse to do a quick reset. Discover savings from shopping and bills to big-ticket items. [Explore your benefits.](#)

Drive away with \$30K. Thinking about a new car? Take out a novated lease through Flare Cars and go in the draw to win \$30,000*. Ends 30 Sept 2026. [Enter now.](#)

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

Simi Kaur, Lecturer, Faculty of Education
Dr Liz Cameron, Associate Professor, Faculty of Health
Dr Rosanne Freak-Poli, Associate Professor, Faculty of Health
Dr Julia Marsden, Lecturer, Faculty of Health
Lara Puckeridge, Governance Officer
Jodie Harrison, Administrative Assistant

Katherine Weissel, Senior Manager, Student Integrity and Conduct
Sara Wang, International Enquiry & Conversion Officer (Future Students)
Emily Wolter, Manager, Study Abroad & Partnerships
Shelly Mills, Cyber Resilience Specialist
Damon Claverie, Principal Cloud Engineer

Teigan Miller, Inclusion Support Advisor
Dr Samantha De Alwis, Inclusion
Support Advisor

Dr Tracey Harrison-Hill, Data
Coordinator

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.

Interested in previous editions of Southern Cross Matters? [View the archive.](#)

