

Donor Impact Report 2021





Thank you from the Vice-Chancellor

Despite the ongoing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic both within Australia and internationally, 2021 was another strong year for the University of Southern Queensland.

Again, we were presented with many challenges and much uncertainty, but collectively, as an institution focussed on creating and sharing knowledge, transforming lives and solving the problems that matter to our world. We took on these challenges as an opportunity to seek out and refine new and better ways of doing things.

A key milestone for the University in 2021 was the release of our new Strategic Plan 2021-2025, which articulates the University's aspirations for the period. Building upon our strength as Australia's leading regional University, the Plan expresses our key commitments that will enable realisation of our vision for innovation and excellence.

As a community-centred University, our goals focus on:

- growing our student population and broadening participation in higher education;
- being the University of choice across our regions for staff and students;

- delivering an outstanding student experience and outcomes;
- growing the quality and quantity of research outcomes;
- contributing to the sustainable development of our communities; and
- maintaining our capacity for investment into our future.

The achievement of these goals is made possible by the philanthropy of our donors, who are our partners in significant, far-reaching, meaningful change for the communities we serve.

The gifts we received from alumni, staff, industry and friends in 2021 enabled us to deliver some remarkable outcomes, some of which are detailed in this report. These stories bring into sharp focus the opportunities provided and the lives changed by philanthropy.

On behalf of the University of Southern Queensland, I offer my warm thanks to our donors. Although we continue to live in unprecedented times, your generosity has remained a constant, bringing with it a shared sense of purpose and hope for the future.

Professor Geraldine Mackenzie

Vice-Chancellor, University of Southern Queensland

Scholarships power Lewis' nursing dream

Growing up in Miles, Lewis Brown has an affinity with rural Queensland he's come to realise he cannot shake.

Focusing his senior years of high school on ambitions to study business and legal studies, he came to realise that life in a suit and tie wasn't for him and in 2021 changed career tracks to healthcare.

"This year, I turn 19 and am excited to be in my second year of a Bachelor of Nursing at the University of Southern Queensland," Lewis said.

"My dream is to become a rural nurse and that dream will be realised thanks to the support I've had from scholarship opportunities from the University."

Funded by the University's Scholarship Endowment Fund, the one-off scholarship is open to applicants across any discipline commencing their studies in a bachelor's degree.

"To be named as a scholarship recipient meant so much to me," Lewis said.

"It meant that I could pursue my career goals and not stress about the financial burden that comes with attending long placements, paying for textbooks and other study equipment," he said.

"The scholarship allowed for me to be able to take time away from work to attend my first nursing placement and give my full attention to learning as much as I possibly could. My life at home and while away from work was much more manageable thanks to the support of this special first-year scholarship, and I was also able to buy textbooks to support my studies."

Lewis also received the 2021 Taylor Family Rural and Remote Scholarship. In recognition of the challenges faced by rural and remote students in their first year at university, the Taylor Family established an annual scholarship providing support over two semesters.

"I had the opportunity to meet Robert and Judith Taylor and explain my future career goals in rural nursing. Their financial support, as well as knowing that there are people who believe in me as a young nurse, has had a significant impact on my studies and my practice as a student nurse," he said.

“Donors make an incredible impact on the lives of students. On the surface, students may be able to afford their textbooks or study materials; however, it’s much more than this.

“Financial support to a student means less hours they have to spend at work or stressing about money. This leaves so much more time and energy to be spent on their studies and enjoy the student experience.”

“The impact you can have on a students life is remarkable. Sometimes all it takes is for someone to believe.”

Lewis Brown

Bachelor of Nursing student and dual scholarship recipient



Supporting international students

In late 2021, Sharanjit Kaur Dhaliwal – known as Sharan – graduated from the University of Southern Queensland with a Bachelor of Nursing. It was a culmination of three years of wonderful highs, and incredible lows, as an international student in the midst of a global pandemic.

“Being a nursing student, the study load was high but as an international student, it proved to be even more challenging,” Sharan said.

“When I started my nursing in February 2019, I was fully dependent on my parents back home in India to pay my tertiary fees, but I was also working in the beauty industry to manage my daily expenses.”

When Covid hit in early 2020, just 12 months into Sharan’s degree, the financial impact was immediate.

“The whole world shut down and I ended up losing my job. My parents were struggling to pay my fees also as Covid was really bad in India, but I had to ask them for help to pay my rent and food as well,” she remembered.

“I was feeling like I would not be able to finish my degree, so I applied for a scholarship, hoping to get some help. When I got the email telling me that I had been selected for the Professor Ronel Erwee Toowoomba Garden City Zonta Club Bursary, it was a lifesaving moment for me.

“This bursary not only allowed me to dedicate more time to my studies, and get my degree as soon as possible, but it also made me feel like a valued part of society.”

Sharan, who is now working full-time as a nurse in South Australia, said she hopes to follow in the footsteps of her supporters, and give back to others in the future.

President of Toowoomba Garden City Zonta Club, Wendy Roche, said the Professor Ronel Erwee Bursary was extremely important to the club and members were always committed to fundraising for the donation to the University of Southern Queensland.

“The funds make an enormous difference in the lives of the students we have helped, and we know this as we have received letters of thanks as well as visits to our club meetings from bursary students,” she said.



"They have spoken about being able to purchase textbooks or pay fees that they would not have been able to do without the bursary, that then helps them to graduate and start their careers making a difference to our community in healthcare and other professions.

"We're delighted to contribute and believe the bursary is like a 'seeding grant' that gives blossom to future careers, women's leadership opportunities and advances in female-led research," she said.

PHOTO: Sonia Wood, Sharanjit Kaur Dhaliwal, Wendy Roche, Lyn Nicholson and Vanessa Priebe

"This bursary gave me a chance to earn the degree that I always dreamed of. Saying 'thank you' does not justify the contribution that Garden City Zonta Club have made in my life."

Sharanjit Kaur Dhaliwal

Bachelor of Nursing graduate and Professor Ronel Erwee Garden City Zonta Club Bursary recipient

Sending a signal: inaugural First Nations Endowed Scholarship

Southern Queensland represents a sizeable measure of Australia's First Nations populations, and it's forecast that in 10 years' time, it will be the biggest Indigenous region in the country.

It's a statistic that is driving the University of Southern Queensland to continue to provide increasing pathways to higher education and career success for First Nations people, including the launch of the new First Nations Endowed Scholarship.

University of Southern Queensland Pro Vice-Chancellor (First Nations Education and Research), Professor Tony Dreise, said with First Nations enrolments continuing to grow, the time is right to further invest in emerging Indigenous leaders.

"A scholarship is special for anyone because we often overlook the true cost of higher education, and it can be incredibly hard for some people trying to get through life as a student," Professor Dreise said.

"However, it's even more challenging for many First Nations young people because there are inevitably sizable inequities for them to overcome before they even start, which can make that climb towards graduation even steeper and longer.

"This scholarship sends a signal to people with resources and funds to share – either philanthropically or altruistically – that there is talent worthy of investing in, which delivers only good things back to our local economies and communities.



At the launch of the University of Southern Queensland's First Nations Endowed Scholarship are (from left) Pro Vice-Chancellor (First Nations Education and Research) Professor Tony Dreise, University Vice-Chancellor Professor Geraldine Mackenzie, The Venerable Zhi Yang (Pure Land Learning College) and University of Southern Queensland's Elder in Residence Uncle Wayne Fossey.

“It’s also a signal to our young First Nations people – there are opportunities for you and university is absolutely attainable.”

A collaborative effort, the First Nations Endowed Scholarship is generously supported by Pure Land Learning College and CatholicCare, where their contributions have been matched by the University 2:1.

The Venerable Zhi Yang from Pure Land Learning College said the Association was pleased to support the initiative, which represented similar values to its teachings.

“I am very impressed with the University’s values and culture – one of which is involving Indigenous Australians in higher education and employment,” Mr Yang said.

“I also commend their aim to attract, recruit and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to both academic and professional positions across the University.

“My teachings strongly advocate for this spirit of sharing, and I believe this will bring greater prosperity for our society.”



At launch of the University of Southern Queensland's First Nations Endowed Scholarship are (from left) University Vice-Chancellor Professor Geraldine Mackenzie with contributors The Venerable Zhi Yang (Pure Land Learning College) and Kate Venables (Executive Director, CatholicCare Toowoomba and South West QLD).

“First Nations young people need opportunities and scholarships to help with the true cost of a university education. It’s through collaboration that we can make sure our young people are engaged in education and employment that we can begin to turn the tide.”

Professor Tony Dreise

University of Southern Queensland Pro Vice-Chancellor (First Nations Education and Research)

Gifts of Art

Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, a collection of thirty artworks were offered to the University by Brisbane-based collectors Andrew Turkington and Michele Slack.

The collection of paintings and sculptures by various Australian artists – including Charles Blackman, David Bromley and Sir Sidney Nolan – was donated to the University through Mr Turkington and Ms Slack's desire to see the important works gifted to a regional institution.

“Gifts of art contribute to the cultural fabric of our campuses and offer a priceless sense of place and being and wonder, that only art can deliver.”

Brodie Taylor

University of Southern Queensland Curator (Arts and Exhibitions)

University of Southern Queensland Curator (Arts and Exhibitions), Brodie Taylor, said the collection was an incredible addition to the University's collected works.

“The relationships fostered through the donation process are also incredibly important to the University of Southern Queensland, and we are so grateful to the cultural donors who see our campuses as the ideal location for their works.”

The University also accepted a polychromed resin sculpture, *Female Graduate, Artist Proof* created by artist Linda Klarfeld. This is a stunning example of contemporary figurative sculpture, which was donated under the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program.

The University also welcomed a donation from David Hinchliffe, with his acrylic painting, *Japanese Gardens*, depicting the iconic location on the Toowoomba campus, featured on the front cover.

Featured Works



David Bromley

Waterspout

c. 1960

40 x 40 cm comp; 66 x 66 cm framed

Synthetic polymer on board



Charles Blackman

Self Portrait with Christabel

1982

56 x 38 cm comp; 78 x 60 cm framed

Charcoal on paper



Sculpture by Linda Klarfeld

Female Graduate

2007

Height 2000 x 1300 x 1000 mm

Polychromed resin

Family legacy underpins prize in astrophysics

Dick White's mother, Jessie White (nee Smart), moved from Toowoomba to Brisbane to gain a tertiary education after the end of World War One. It was a time when a young girl's aspirations – and ability – to attend university was viewed through a limiting cultural lens.

"She was required to complete her senior year at secondary school, twice, 'just to be sure' she would be able to achieve academically at university," Dick recalled.

Jessie certainly did succeed, gaining a Master of Arts degree in political economy and then tutoring at the University of Queensland. Years later, when her husband – biochemist and State Government analyst Dr Monty White – died of cancer at a young age, she returned to study and then to teaching to support her five children.

"She knew firsthand the value of education and never missed an opportunity to tell young girls and women how important it was," Dick said.

Jessie's maternal grandfather, Darius Hunt, established the Toowoomba Chronicle in 1861, was an auditor of the then Toowoomba Building Society and was strongly involved with the Drayton and Toowoomba Agricultural Society and Horticultural Society and the School of Arts.

The original Hunt-Smart award was created in 1961 by Jessie White with the intention to provide financial support each year for one promising student from the broader Toowoomba region to undertake tertiary study. It was administered by the Toowoomba Chronicle and the funds came from a family inheritance that supported students for many years.

In 2021, the University of Southern Queensland revived the award and added to its funds to support the Hunt-Smart Endowment to recognise excellent students in astrophysics – one of the University's flagship research areas.

"The University of Southern Queensland's approach to encouraging students to excel is commended by my whole family and we are very pleased to have an association with the University in its management of the Hunt-Smart Prize," Dick White said.

“The work that is being undertaken at the University of Southern Queensland in astrophysics at a student-level and a research-level with consequent practical applications is forward-thinking and incredibly innovative. There is an extraordinarily strong resonance between the life principles of my forebears and what the University is doing in critical areas.”

Dick White

*Descendant of Darius Hunt and Jessie Smart,
named for the Hunt-Smart Prize in Astrophysics*

The inaugural winners of the Hunt-Smart Prize in Astrophysics were announced in late 2021 – Sue Storey and Angela Bruce.

Angela Bruce recently completed her science degree at the University of Southern Queensland and has plans to complete a Master in Teaching and Learning.

“My passion is maths and exoplanetary science and I want to share that with students in the future,” she said.

“My senior maths and science teacher was incredible and turned maths into something that everyone was interested in. I want to be able to do that for other students in the future.”

PHOTO: Angela Bruce and Richard (Dick) White



Honouring a legacy of mentoring

Warwick McEvoy graduated from the University of Southern Queensland in 1994 with a Bachelor of Business. He went on to pursue a successful global career in mining that took him all over Australia, Asia and the rest of the world – that led him to hold the position of Chief Financial Officer for Downer Mining.

He was also passionate about developing young people and mentored many business graduates at the start of their career – and now a scholarship in his name will ensure his legacy and memory is honoured by continuing to support up and coming professionals.

The Downer Group Warwick McEvoy Memorial Scholarship, offered for the first time in 2022, has been set up by the Downer Group to support a commencing University of Southern Queensland Bachelor of Business student, following Warwick's passing in 2021.

Downer Group Chief Financial Officer, Michael Ferguson, worked with Warwick for a number of years and says the company is proud to honour Warwick's memory by contributing to the scholarship.

"Warwick was a wonderful colleague, an outstanding professional and an excellent leader," Mr Ferguson said.

"He was highly respected and admired by those who worked with and for him.

"Warwick had a passion for developing the next generation of finance leaders so it is very pleasing that his legacy will live on through this scholarship."

Warwick's eldest son, Jake, said his Dad was very moved by the idea of the scholarship and would have loved how it was set up.

“Due to Downer’s generosity, it is an annuity scholarship, so it will be able to help many future students. I know the idea of annuity to a CFO would have been appealing too,” he said.

Jake said his Dad was remembered as a proud family man who, while successful in his career, was also a firm believer in balance.

“We hope future recipients of this scholarship use the funds to also enjoy the social side of university life, as well as to further their education.”

PHOTO: Bachelor of Business Alumnus, Warwick McEvoy



“The Scholarship is a very special initiative to our whole family and we are forever thankful to the Downer Group for initiating the scholarship. Dad loved his time in Toowoomba and was passionate about helping young people get a leg up at the start of their careers.”

Jake McEvoy

Son of University Alumnus, Warwick McEvoy.

Backing the next generation of rural nurses

Abby Burge grew up between the family property north-east of Allora and the family home on the outskirts of Toowoomba. With three brothers, Abby concedes she was no stranger to farm accidents and the sight of blood.

“Whether this involved one brother losing half of his finger in a combine harvester, another one falling off the back of a truck and slicing his side open with a piece of aluminium or quadbike accident – rather than being grossed out by the blood, I was always one of the first ones to rush to see what was going on and how I could help in any way,” she said.

With life lessons, combined with stories shared by both of her grandmothers who worked as nurses, Abby’s interest in a nursing career was more than inevitable.

Abby plans to study her Masters upon completion of her Bachelor degree, with a major in rural and remote nursing, and midwifery.

“There is a severe lack of nursing and healthcare staff out west, especially in the times we are currently facing with COVID-19,” Abby said.

“The rural and remote healthcare system is being placed under increasing pressure with sometimes incomprehensible wait times for rural patients. This troubles me, and while I am only one person, if I can encourage others to pursue a rural and remote career as well, I believe we can start to make a positive change.

“The opportunities are endless in the rural and remote setting, with a larger area to cover with less staff than city nursing, and you get to witness and be involved in a wider variety of scenarios that constantly challenge and grow your skillset.

“This fills me with a sense of anticipation of the skills that I would be able to grow and then use to provide quality care in any situation.”

It’s that level of passion that deemed Abby Burge a worthy recipient of the 2021 Felicity Purcell Nursing Bursary. Felicity was a University of Southern Queensland nursing graduate who was widely respected in her field. In 2008, Felicity sadly lost her battle to breast cancer and died at only 33 years of age. The bursary was first awarded in 2010 through efforts of the Purcell family and friends and they continue their support today.

The bursary promotes the best traditions of nursing's ethos of care for others, as embodied by Felicity and provides financial assistance to a nursing student who, like Felicity, come from a rural or remote background. Felicity's brother, Damian, describes the bursary as 'an incredibly special thing.'

"We're a rural family and we know how important it is for young people to come through and get an opportunity they may not have been afforded without that little bit of extra help," he said.

"Abby told us she would love to one day work for the Royal Flying Doctor Service, so it means a lot to our family that she's so focused on nursing in rural areas long term. Above all we're just so honoured that something in Felicity's name continues to serve the community."

For the first time in 2022, the Eagers Automotive Foundation will also be financially supporting the Felicity Purcell Nursing Bursary. Chairman of the Foundation, Bob Kendall, said it's been a serendipitous and fulfilling process.

"At the beginning of each year the Foundation reaches out to our dealerships around Australia for suggestions on where we might best direct funds to charitable causes, and we like to know if there's something close to their hearts," he said

"It's quite special to support a staff member and the communities they serve. We take immense pleasure in knowing this is a rural focused bursary. That's especially important to us with so many of our dealerships in rural and regional areas. It's still a hard slog for many families to support tertiary studies, so it feels good to play a small part in supporting rural students continue university study."

"There is something special about investing in someone within your community – never underestimate the power that a little support has on a university student."

Abby Burge

Bachelor of Nursing student and Felicity Purcell Nursing Bursary recipient



**For your vision, your generosity,
and your commitment to our
shared future – we thank you.**

**The philanthropy we receive
from alumni, staff, industry and
friends is inspiring and enables
the University to deliver much
more to our community than we
otherwise could. We could not
do what we do without you.**





Contact us

To find out more about how to give through the University of Southern Queensland, please contact us:

Phone +61 7 3470 4427

Email giving@usq.edu.au

Web usq.edu.au/giving



Front cover painting donated by David Hinchliffe, Japanese Gardens, Acrylic paint on canvas, 2021

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