

## Students win national awards for community-based projects

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**July 26, 2006**

A team from The University of New England has won a first prize and a second prize in a national competition that encourages students to use their business skills for the benefit of the community.

The seven UNE students travelled to Brisbane earlier this month to compete – with teams from 27 other Australian universities – in the seventh annual competition of Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) Australia. This is the fourth successive year that UNE has sent a team to the national competition.



Karina Gill, President of SIFE UNE, said the competition, held at Brisbane's Hilton Hotel, had been "a lot of fun". "You get the chance to meet students from across Australia who are using the skills they have been taught at university to improve the community in different ways," said Ms Gill, who is in the fifth year of her Bachelor of Financial Administration / Bachelor of Laws degree program at UNE.

The UNE team won equal first place (along with the University of Western Sydney) in an award for "best team sustainability strategy", receiving a trophy and \$1,000 in prize money. They also won second prize in an award for "best financial management skills project". With the project that won them the latter award, they are helping UNE's sporting clubs to counter the negative impact of voluntary student unionism by teaching them financial management, fundraising, marketing and recruiting skills. Their other projects include work with stall-holders at the Armidale Markets to develop a Web site and enhance their business skills, and with parents at Minimbah Primary School to develop fund-raising and other financial skills. The Minimbah project has attracted grants worth \$1,350 from the banking organisation HSBC.

Along with Ms Gill (who is pictured here), the UNE team members are: Andrew Begg (who is in the fourth year of his Bachelor of Commerce / Bachelor of Economics degree program), Louise Hamilton (fifth year of Bachelor of Arts / Bachelor of Laws), Lex Henderson (second year of Bachelor of Arts / Bachelor of Commerce), Samantha Harris (first year of Bachelor of Economics / Bachelor of Laws), Rowena Bellingham (fourth year of Bachelor of Arts / Bachelor of Teaching), and Liz Walsh (first year of Bachelor of Business / Bachelor of Laws). Their Faculty Adviser, Gina Milgate (a Lecturer in UNE's New England Business School) accompanied them to Brisbane.

Ms Gill explained that the judges in the competition, who come from some of Australia's biggest companies, are looking for likely recruits. "A careers fair is held for participating students," she

said, “where they can speak with human resources representatives from those companies, and lodge their resumes and applications.”

“Being a part of SIFE develops skills in public speaking, event organisation, finance, marketing, teaching, and working with the Internet,” she continued. “You also make long-lasting friendships, and your chances of gaining employment upon graduation increase greatly. SIFE activities also count towards UNE’s New England Award, which recognises a student’s extra-curricular activities in education and community involvement.

“We will be recruiting students this semester from all Faculties, and we would also like to hear from interested external students. Skills we are especially seeking from new members this semester include Web skills, marketing, recruiting, photography, graphic design, public speaking, education, and teaching. But there are many ways that members can participate, whether it be raising money by selling chocolates, cooking sausages at our barbecues, or taking on a leadership role.”

Students interested in joining SIFE should contact the Recruitment Officer, Samantha Harris, on (02) 6773 1172 (e-mail: [sharri34@une.edu.au](mailto:sharri34@une.edu.au)).

Posted by [Jim Scanlan](#) at July 26, 2006 09:34 AM