

Citation – Emeritus Professor Caroline Gross

Emeritus Professor Gross has an outstanding international reputation for research and scholarship. She has 30 years' experience studying the reproductive ecology of Australian native plants and introduced species and has conducted field work internationally including in Bhutan, Borneo and Hawaii. Professor Gross has attracted significant external funding (>\$2.2 million) for her research at UNE from both research funding agencies (Hermon Slade, Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment and the Office of Environment and Heritage) and industry (Rio Tinto; Coal and Allied). As recognition of the quality and impact of her research, Professor Gross was appointed by the Australian Research Council to the Excellence in Research Australia peer review committee for the 05 (Environmental Sciences) Field of Research codes ([ERA2018](#)). She has also reviewed grants for the UK Natural Environment Research Council since 2002.

Professor Gross' leadership and reputation has been evidenced by several prestigious appointments spanning her career. From 2009–2016 she held a ministerial appointment on the NSW Biobanking Panel. The panel provided advice to the NSW Minister for the Environment on the accreditation of consultants for biodiversity assessment. Professor Gross is currently a member on the NSW Threatened Species Scientific Committee (2019–2022) again through ministerial appointment. This prominent committee's role is to assess the risk of extinction of native species in New South Wales and decide which species should be listed as critically endangered, endangered, vulnerable or extinct in the state. From 1994–1998 Professor Gross was President of the Australian Pollination Ecologists Society, and she was Vice-President of the Ecological Society of Australia between 2004 and 2007. In 2019 she was nominated to the Australian Academy of Science (outcome pending).

Professor Gross has provided highly valuable service contributions to the University and the wider community. In 2018, she was appointed Deputy Dean of the newly formed Faculty of Science, Agriculture, Business and Law (SABL). This followed prior appointments as a Head and Deputy Head of School (2006–2018) including a 6 month acting role as Head of the UNE Business School in 2018–2019. As Deputy Dean, Professor Gross has shown exemplary leadership with significant contribution to all areas of strategy and operations including development of courses, research leadership, international partnerships (IEG Malaysia) and communications and culture. Professor Gross has and continues to be a proactive advocate for gender equity. In 2018 she successfully developed a case to the Human Rights Commission for female targeted positions in STEM. In addition, for several years she has participated in mentorship training for the RUN network and provided opportunities for female staff both within UNE and more broadly across RUN members.

The Australian landscape and in particular the New England is a biodiversity hot-spot where the values of society are often in conflict with conservation needs. Professor Gross holds the view that it is essential as a research leader to engage with the community and industry to relate the research and to find ways to ensure the sustainable management of natural resources. Over the last 27 years while at UNE, Professor Gross has found ways to engage at many levels — from School groups, to government agencies, with professional societies and committees both national and international, and multi-national mining companies. Newly arrived at UNE in 1994, Caroline played a major role in the education of macadamia growers in SE Queensland to the possibilities of germplasm enrichment from the wild if growers conserved their natural environments, and for the first time her treatise of the genus in 1995 provided clear guidelines on the edible and poisonous macadamia species. In 2007 Caroline harnessed the power of Rio Tinto through her restoration work to bring community groups to UNE for workshops so that the people of the mine-affected hamlets of Bulga and Warkworth could take on the restoration techniques for their own remnant vegetation areas. The legacy of this work can also be seen with the UNE Trevenna glasshouses, officially opened by Rio Tinto in 2008, but built with the funding that Professor Gross brought to UNE from her research supported by Rio Tinto.

In summary, Caroline Gross is an outstanding scholar who has made impressive contributions both to her discipline and also to UNE. Caroline Gross has served the University with distinction.