From: University of New England
To: Rhonda Brooks
Subject: UNE Alumni Newsletter - Autumn 2023
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une University of New England Alumni

Autumn 2023

Alumni Newsletter

Embracing change

The world in which we live and work is forever changing. Against a backdrop of rapid technological transformation, geopolitical disruption, environmental change and economic volatility, individuals and enterprises need to be responsive and adaptive.

In this autumn issue of the alumni newsletter, we introduce members of the UNE community who have not only adapted, but thrived. People like **Craig Raymond**, who has overcome adversity and successfully switched careers, and career humanitarian **Karen Farkas**, who despite being exposed to the very worst in humanity continues to celebrate the very best.

You will also meet author, businessman and philanthropist **Rob McLean**, AM, who has written on the need for imperfection in today's imperfect world.

"Change is accelerating with uncertainty and we really need some different ways of thinking about this," Rob says. "Putting to work new mindsets starts with unleashing curiosity and asking audacious questions. It is likely to require changing the lenses through which we look at problems, and experimentation. Recognising that the best people to solve any given problem may not be in your circle or team, we must be prepared to develop ecosystems that tap into the collective wisdom and expertise of others.

"Uncertainty is peeled away as a result of experimenting, learning and asking the big questions, bringing others in and not being confined by your own capabilities. It's a path we have to choose, characterised by some improbability and uncertainty, but that's part of the process – to learn and take steps forward, steps back, but keep building.

"The idea of a business strategy these days is a complete fantasy; market conditions and other disruptive forces will sabotage it at every turn. Industries are being reshaped; many businesses don't know who their competitors are today or tomorrow. That's where pragmatic problem-solving comes in."

Alumni Stories

Karen Farkas

After 37 years with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNE alumna Karen Farkas is wrapping up a humanitarian career that has taken her into war zones and corridors of power around the world.

Read more >

Rob McLean

The “paralysing uncertainty” of COVID-19 has been the driving force for a new book co-authored by Rob, that explores new ways of thinking – and succeeding – in these craziest of times.

Read more >

Michelle McKemey

Michelle partners with Indigenous groups to work together to look after Country and culture, especially through the reintroduction of cultural burning practices.

Read more >

Bronte Lee

Rural Adversity Mental Health Program (RAMHP) Coordinator Bronte Lee's workplace is ever-changing, as are the needs of her communities.

Read more >

Craig Raymond

Before COVID Craig led an active life as a personal trainer and ran a successful corporate gym. Then, in 2019-20, he was struck by a “double whammy”.

Read more >

Sarah Jefford

Sarah is one of the few specialist family creation (surrogacy and donor conception) lawyers in the country. Of the 105 surrogacy births in Australia last year, 75 were to her clients.

Read more >

Andrew McConville

Significant flooding and now a major fish kill … it has certainly been a challenging initiation for the chief executive of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA).

Read more >

Bridget Van der Eyk

How does a high school science and agriculture teacher from regional NSW create a fictional realm centred on the scandalous love life of a Hollywood heiress?

Read more >

Peter Newman

When UNE alumnus, Peter Newman, was in his final years of high school, he had big dreams to use his love of STEM for the greater good.

Read more >

Movers & Shakers

Congratulations to....

- NSW's new **Premier Chris Minns** and **Treasurer Daniel Mookhe**y – both UNE alumni – who were swept to power in the March state election. Chris achieved a Bachelor of Arts at UNE in 2008, became the Member for Kogarah in March 2015, Leader of the Opposition in June 2021 and now NSW's 47th Premier. His Treasurer was the former Shadow Minister for the Gig Economy and Shadow Treasurer in Opposition, and graduated with a Master of Arts from UNE in 2011.
- Hats off to Katherine cattlewoman **Val Dyer** – the first and to this day only female president of the NT Cattlemen's Association – who has received life membership of the organisation. The former educator has an Honours degree in Agricultural Economics from UNE and was the inaugural NT Rural Woman of the Year. Her life membership recognises Val's significant contribution to the Northern Territory's cattle industry.
- UNE Bachelor of Arts and Master of Business Administration graduate **Corey Richards** has received the Young Achiever Award from the Outback Queensland Tourism Association (OQTA). Corey is the Operations Manager at the Eromanga Natural History Museum and was recently appointed Queensland Young Tourism Leader for the Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport. The OQTA award recognises his dedication to boosting tourism in outback Queensland. Well done, Corey.
- Three UNE graduates – **Sophie Wood** (Bachelor of Business), **Jed McEvoy** (Bachelor of Agriculture) and **Keiley Noble** (Bachelor of Agriculture and Business) – were among the eight finalists for the coveted 2023 R.M. Williams RAS Rural Achiever Award at this year's Sydney Royal Easter Show, with Keiley taking top honours. She now goes on to represent NSW at the National Rural Ambassador Competition in 2024. Also at this year's Sydney Royal, UNE alumni **Florance McGufficke** and **Jessica Towns** were named winner and runner-up, respectively, in the NSW Young Woman program.
- Three UNE geophysics graduates have received 14 of the gold medals awarded by the Australian Society of Exploration Geophysicists during the past 38 years. The latest is **Phillip Schmidt**, who worked for the CSIRO for 34 years, including as Chief Research Scientist prior to his retirement in 2012. The former Earle Page

College resident and Bachelor of Science (Honours) graduate was recognised for his “outstanding record in research and practical applications, in the education of students and working explorationists, and in service to Australian earth sciences research”. A rock-solid achievement indeed.

Alumni Awards

2023 Alumni Awards are now open for nominations

Find out more >

We met at UNE

Kylie and Nick Fuad

Their first theatre production at UNE was playing husband and wife in the classic Australian play Brumby Innes. Within two years, they’d made it official. Kylie and Nick Fuad have now been married for 25 years and, among other theatrical life events, survived last year’s devastating Lismore floods.

Read more >

Alumni Reunions

Socialist Action Movement 50

year Reunion

On 14-16 February, the former Socialist Action Movement (SAM), had their 50 year reunion on campus in Armidale.

As young students in the period 1971 to 1976, they were involved in various social and political issues of the time, Anti-Apartheid and Anti-War issues, Environmental issues, Women's Rights issues etc.

Here we talk to co-founder Rod Noble about the energy and idealism of the Movement.

Watch video >

Law School's 30th Anniversary

UNE Law School celebrated its 30th anniversary at the picturesque Booloominbah Historic House in Armidale. The event was a huge success, with over 80 guests attending, including guest speaker, the Honourable Chief Justice Lucy McCallum.

Read more >

In Memoriam

John Kerin, an agricultural policy elder statesman, economist and Labor Minister during the Hawke and Keating governments, has died at the age of 85. **Read more >**

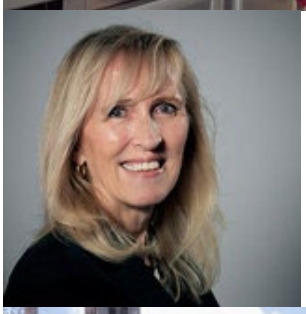
Rear Admiral James Goldrick, who has died aged 64, was a rare combination of practical seaman, notable commander and leader, and internationally recognised scholar. **Read more >**

UNE News

Long-serving and much loved

For 40 years she's been the smiling face that has greeted thousands of hungry and homesick UNE college students, but Maureen Hollis has finally called time on her long-serving career.

Read more >



A history of care and compassion

Much-loved UNE professional staff member Trish Wright holds a special place in the hearts of many alumni – especially history graduates – and has now been honoured for her career-long dedication.

Read more >

Top job prospects

UNE has ranked in the top three performing universities for domestic full-time graduate employment in the 2022 Graduate Outcomes Survey.

Read more >

UNE helping to fill growing demand for medical professionals

UNE's New England Virtual Health Network (NEViHN) is an innovation designed to maximise health professional education opportunities and practitioner support in regional areas.

Read more >

UNE Tamworth progress update

UNE is in the final stages of approving the successful architectural firm that will design UNE Tamworth, on track to be completed by the end of 2025.

Read more >

UNE to lead $1.9 million methane reduction project

UNE will lead a ground-breaking research collaboration that will help the nation's sheep graziers overcome an important barrier standing in the way of carbon neutrality.

Read more >

Work of world-renowned coral taxamonist on display at the UNE Natural History Museum

A new exhibition showcasing the work of world-renowned coral taxonomist and UNE alumnus, Professor Charlie Veron, is now on display at the UNE Natural History Museum.

Read more >

Around UNE

une University of New England

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

What does a few hundred million years of history look like?

Our collection comes from far and wide. While predominantly from Oceania and the Americas, some specimens come originate from Madagascar, Antarctica and Greenland. Botanical, zoological and geological treasures have been meticulously curated over the past 30 years by academics and enthusiasts, gathering and trading specimens between universities and museums all over the world.

Find out more >

Support UNE

2023 Annual Appeal

Your donations to our scholarships fund play a key role in supporting UNE students. Please donate today! Thank you.

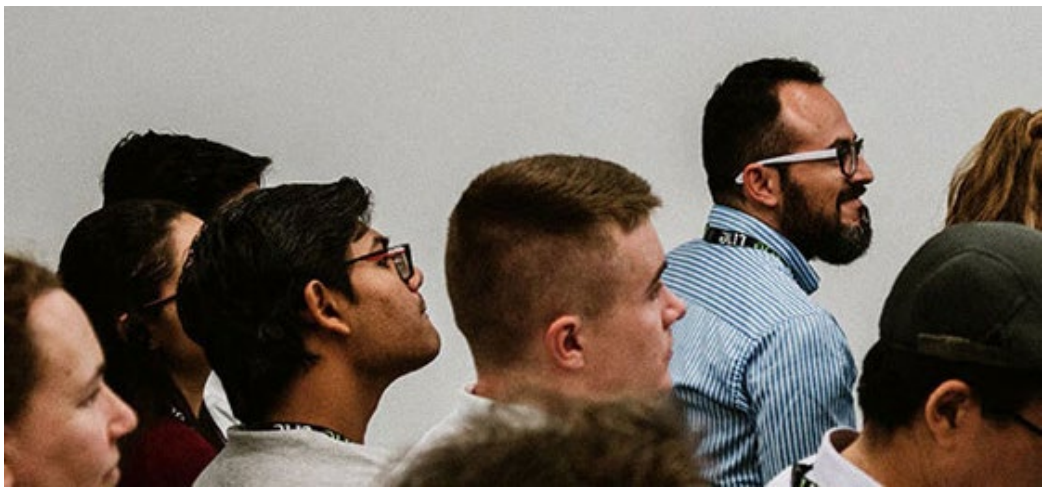
Give Now >

Join our Graduates' Walk

A Graduates' Walk paver is an opportunity to celebrate your success whilst giving back to your university and support student scholarships.

Graduates' Walk >

UNE Events



Tune in or join us in person for TamTalks

Every month, UNE alumni, staff, students and members of the wider community gather for an engaging instalment of TamTalks. It's a great opportunity to expand your network, walk in someone else's shoes for an hour or foster new partnerships.

TamTalks Speaker Series

Scheduled for lunchtime (12-1pm) on the second Tuesday of each month, this series was launched by UNE Tamworth in September last year and is growing in popularity, courtesy of some lively speakers.

So far we've featured presentations on healing First Nations communities through art, social media and the law, as well as body donations and the paranormal. Whatever the subject, it's a wonderful opportunity to learn something new and engage with UNE Tamworth.

Those joining us in person, and registering through **Eventbrite**, enjoy a free light lunch but we also love to see UNE faces – old and new – via Zoom.

Visit the **UNE Tamworth Facebook page** for more details of our upcoming talks and how you can become involved.

Are we there yet? - Tamtalks with UNE Alum Dan Daley

Alum Dan Daley was recently generous enough to share his experiences and insights from his journey with UNE and through life in general, at UNE Tamworth's ongoing TamTalks series.

Watch Video

Autumn Graduation Ceremonies

Graduation - Faculty of Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences and Education
Date: Friday 28 April 2023 10:30 am - 12:00 pm
Venue: Lawns of Booloominbah - University of New England, Armidale

Graduation - Faculty of Medicine and Health
Date: Friday 28 April 2023 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm
Venue: Lawns of Booloominbah - University of New England, Armidale

Graduation - Faculty of Science, Agriculture, Business and Law
Date: Saturday 289 April 2023 10:30 am - 12:00 pm
Venue: Lawns of Booloominbah - University of New England, Armidale

View UNE Events Calendar >

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The University of New England respects and acknowledges that its people, programs and facilities are built on land, and surrounded by a sense of belonging, both ancient and contemporary, of the world's oldest living culture. In doing so, UNE values and respects Indigenous knowledge systems as a vital part of the knowledge capital of Australia.

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