


ignite



 USC

2020 EDITION

USC DETECTION DOGS:
OUR LAND'S BEST
FRIEND

USC WELCOMES A NEW
VICE-CHANCELLOR
AND PRESIDENT

OUTSTANDING ALUMNI
AWARDS 2020

Rise, and shine.



USC DETECTION DOGS:

Our land's best friend

BY TOM SNOWDON and KATE EVANS

THE team of USC researchers have located the koala huddled in the fork of the blackened tree in the burnt-out Amamoor State Forest — a rugged but beautiful area about 20km out of Gympie.

The sprawling national park was decimated by bushfires in 2019. But with little to no human life impacted, virtually no one has been in to survey the damage — especially to local wildlife populations.

That is, until USC's Detection Dogs for Conservation (DDC) sought permission to conduct surveys looking for surviving koalas.

Thanks to star detection dog Bear, the team have located several surviving koalas during this deployment, including the one in the fork of the burnt-out tree.

But because of the way the koala is clutching the tree trunk, it's difficult to tell if it's injured or malnourished—especially if, for example, there are burn marks on its paws from crawling across smouldering ruins.

Even for researchers from USC's Detection Dogs for Conservation, who have done hundreds of these health assessments, it can be a challenge.

But after some careful observation and deliberation, they believe this koala needs help.

Three of the researchers, working together, gently coax the koala down from its bolthole — an exercise that's fraught with peril because koalas are prone to bouts of panic. It takes a team of experts, who possess unwavering concentration and patience, to pull off such a feat.

It takes time but the group succeeds in rescuing the koala, wrapping the marsupial in a blanket once it's safely on the ground. It's now clear the creature is badly malnourished and scared. Its fur is patchy and discoloured — it needs help.

The team, working quickly now, have organised for the koala to be immediately delivered into the capable and experienced hands of a local wildlife rescue group where it will be nursed back to health and rehabilitated.

This is one important part of the Detection Dogs for Conservation's work — a group of researchers at USC who train rescue dogs to locate or save sick, injured or at-risk wildlife.

Associate Professor Celine Frere and Dr Romane Cristescu co-founded the Detection Dogs for Conservation research group in 2015 to fill a crucial gap in academic conservation work in Australia – the rescuing, training, testing and deploying of detection dogs to help at-risk wildlife.

“OUR detection dogs are very lovable but they don’t usually make very good pets because they are very energetic, obsessive and determined, which are excellent traits to have for conservation work,” Dr Cristescu says.

“When they are not working, our dogs live like normal pets – they go to the beach, play in the park and run around with other dogs. The difference is our dogs have an important day job. They are not just our pets – they are our colleagues.”

Because dogs have so many more smell receptors than humans, they are ideal allies when it comes to locating or rescuing at-risk wildlife. The right dog can track anything with an odour, whether it’s flora or fauna, on land or even under the sea.

Associate Professor Frere says that even professional human spotters miss on average one in every two koalas in the wild.

“Dogs have proved to be much more accurate,” Celine says. “Our detection dogs in particular have been trained to locate and help rescue at-risk animals like koalas and quolls with remarkable success.”

“This is, in part, because everything we do is underpinned by rigorous scientific methodology that supports our conservation efforts.”

Because of their special skills, the DDC have been at the forefront of rescue and recovery missions after natural disasters such as Australia’s devastating bushfire season that started in 2019. This went on to destroy an estimated 11 percent of koala habitat across the country.

The rising star of this particular work has undoubtedly been Bear – the blue-eyed Australian Koolie, co-owned by USC and conservation fund IFAW, who has become somewhat of a hero for locating koalas in woodland areas destroyed by bushfires.

Bear is unique because, while his canine colleagues are trained to locate evidence of koalas, the energetic Koolie can lead researchers directly to the actual animals – a valuable skill to have when you’re against the clock to find woodland creatures who may need urgent medical attention.

Thanks mainly to donations, Bear has gone out with researchers to survey more than 5,000ha of fire-ravaged bushland – such as in Amamoor State Forest where he located the malnourished koala in the fork of the tree.

During deployments such as this, researchers have used a combination of Bear’s unique skills and drones to locate and make health assessments on 120 koalas and rescue another 31 sick or injured native animals.

Ecologists estimate Australia lost a staggering three billion animals during the last bushfire season. However, the threat to life remains long after the fires finish smouldering.

It takes years for natural habitats to recover, and wildlife populations continue to decline as the animals return to their ruined home territories, facing possible death from starvation and dehydration if conservationists such as the DDC aren’t able to continue surveying and monitoring populations.

However, the work of the DDC is broader than protecting koala populations. The team do a lot of conservation work by mapping koalas and quolls in areas earmarked for new development or large infrastructure projects.

They work with governments, private organisations and community groups to provide important ecological research, evidence and support to make planning and development decisions that can protect and preserve Australia’s unique environment and creatures.



Apart from the direct impacts of the team’s work, they have also been an important ally in spreading conservation messages – especially through leveraging Bear’s popularity.

Not only has Bear developed a strong following on social media, including mentions from celebrities such as Leonardo Di Caprio and Tom Hanks on Twitter, he’s also starred in a Foxtel documentary, made frequent appearances in television shows, radio programs and news segments.

This has created a busy schedule for a group that has ballooned from its two founding members a few years ago to now include a whole team of post-graduate researchers, conservationists and trained detection dogs – all of them working for the protection and welfare of Australia’s native animals and habitat.

IMAGE: **above** (L to R) Dr Romane Cristescu, Bear and Associate Professor Celine Frere.



If you’d like to help the Detection Dogs for Conservation team’s work looking after animal welfare and habitat conservation, you can donate at: usc.edu.au/ddc

In August 2020, USC saw the leadership baton change hands for only the second time in the University's twenty-four year history, welcoming the arrival of its third Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Helen Bartlett and farewelling retiring Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Greg Hill AO.

A portrait of Professor Helen Bartlett, a woman with shoulder-length brown hair, wearing a white lab coat over a dark top. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with greenery.

Welcome Professor Helen Bartlett

PROFESSOR Bartlett arrives at USC as an accomplished executive leader, having been Vice-Chancellor and President of Federation University Australia, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of Monash University Malaysia and Pro Vice-Chancellor and President of Monash University's Gippsland Campus.

With a research background in health and aged care (gerontology), Professor Bartlett was the inaugural Director at the Australasian Centre on Ageing at the University of Queensland and was also Foundation Director of the Oxford Centre for Health Care Research and Development and the Oxford Dementia Centre at Oxford Brookes University.

USC Chancellor Angus Houston, who chaired the Vice Chancellor selection panel, felt that Professor Bartlett was very much the perfect fit for USC.

"The selection panel was mindful of USC's history and also its future; its position in its regions and its opportunities for impact," said Sir Angus. "Professor Bartlett has invaluable experience in leading institutions and serving diverse communities; deep appreciation for the role and potential of regional universities through her chairmanship of the Regional Universities Network; and specialist research expertise in health and aged care," he said.

Professor Bartlett's arrival at USC comes at a challenging time

for universities throughout Australia, however she remains upbeat about the purpose of universities, particularly for those outside of major cities.

"There's an enormous satisfaction that comes with widening access to higher education across regional Australia and developing programs that respond to local needs. The multi-campus nature of USC means we can work closely with our local communities and the University's programs can be tailored to meet their needs," said Professor Bartlett.

With USC having grown significantly over recent years, and having established a network of campuses now stretching from the Fraser Coast to the Moreton Bay region, Professor Bartlett is focused on ensuring each campus is delivering local outcomes.

"I'm looking forward to building up our new campus at Moreton Bay, which is clearly already filling a need in that community, as well as working closely with our community, industry and business partners in the Fraser Coast, Sunshine Coast and Gympie region," she said.

Professor Bartlett is currently engaging with staff to review the USC strategic plan. This will take into account recent changes in the tertiary education landscape, brought about by government and the global pandemic, and will also set USC on a successful trajectory as the state and country recovers.



Farewell Professor Greg Hill AO

ON Friday 14 August 2020, Professor Greg Hill ended a decade as Vice-Chancellor and President of USC. This brought to a close a career which began as a school teacher and finished with the award of Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for his distinguished service to education, particularly the development of tertiary facilities in regional areas, and to the community.

Professor Hill joined the University in 2005 as Deputy Vice-Chancellor with a firm agenda to ramp up research capabilities, broaden the range of degrees, boost the University's reputation for teaching quality, and strengthen its engagement with the region.

After his appointment as Vice-Chancellor and President in 2011, Professor Hill championed the establishment of the Sunshine Coast Mind and Neuroscience-Thompson Institute dedicated to teaching, research and clinical work in mental health, as well as USC's Clinical Trials Centre and partnership with the Sunshine Coast Health Institute.

His desire to see people from all backgrounds and circumstances given opportunities for university education led to the expansion of USC's geographic footprint which now extends from the Fraser Coast to Moreton Bay.

Professor Hill also focused on the needs of aspiring athletes seeking university degrees, guiding the development of a High

Performance Student Athlete program and creating a comprehensive educational, clinical and training environment at USC.

Like so much in 2020, Professor Hill's final year involved significant time away from the campus. COVID-19 restrictions delayed his planned surgery and inevitably a return to the office. It also meant a face to face farewell was not possible, resulting in a farewell message delivered to all staff via email.

"When life settles down, I look forward to returning to say some goodbyes and I certainly intend to stay connected to our wonderful University," he wrote. "It has been the best part of my working life in academia to have walked with you, and to have made the tertiary education impact we have achieved, on our now broad region. We have been able to make educational access a reality for these regional communities, including our First Nations peoples," he said.

USC Chancellor Sir Angus Houston congratulated Professor Hill on his retirement and praised him for his tireless work in developing the University.

"Professor Hill's dedication to and leadership of USC's success has been unwavering, exemplified by the University's expansion into new regions, its outstanding results in student success, satisfaction and employability, its growth in research stature and its close and meaningful engagement with its communities," he said.



Four years of high-performance sport at USC

The end of 2020 marks four years of USC high performance sport. During this time, the program has grown from one resident team – the Swimming Australia funded USC Spartans Swim squad – to 14 sport-based partnerships, including resident elite teams Sunshine Coast Lightning and the semi-pro and Olympic Australian Cycling Academy squads.

ELITE and emerging student-athlete numbers have grown from 36 to over 200, including students from interstate and overseas. Fifteen million dollars of quality sporting infrastructure has been developed to be shared with the community, multi-disciplinary research projects are underway, and community engagement programs are in demand, contributing to communities and attracting new students to USC.

“It’s estimated that the exposure of Sunshine Coast Lightning netball team alone has equalled \$9 million in USC brand recognition,” says High Performance Student Program Coordinator Tania Stevenson.

This year’s COVID-19 restrictions saw USC’s state-of-the-art high-performance sport environment in demand by numerous national league teams who relocated to the Queensland elite sport hub. “The NRL’s Melbourne Storm, AFL’s Melbourne Demons and Collingwood Magpies, and Suncorp Super Netball’s Sydney Giants, West Coast Fever and Adelaide Thunderbirds were all regulars in the high-performance gym and aquatic recovery facility.”

The University’s strategic imperative of ‘student success’ underpins the High-Performance Student Athlete Program. It provides a suite of support and benefits tailored to the unique needs of emerging and elite athletes to enable them to excel in their sport and education simultaneously, as well as prepare them for an alternative career when their elite sporting days are over.

The USC student athlete experience has been recognised by other institutions and industry for its comprehensive offerings, supportive environment and focus on social connectedness. Students report very high levels of student satisfaction and perform better academically than the university average.

Graduate outcomes appear promising with many of the first cohort of graduates in 2019 working within their professional fields of Education, Health Science (Orthotics and Prosthetics), Dietetics, Marketing, Nursing and Occupational Therapy.

“As USC high-performance sport continues to mature, new opportunities will continue to arise. We look forward to what the next four years brings!”

For more information about USC high-performance sport including the High Performance Student Athlete Program, visit usc.edu.au/hps

IMAGES: **1** Australian paralympic swimmer Katja Dedekind swims at USC’s new aquatic exercise facility. **2** Sunshine Coast Lightning’s Peace Proscovia. **3** Australian Academy of Cycling (ACA) cyclists in training. **4** Pole vaulter Emily Marschall. **5** Wheelchair basketball player Steven Elliott.

2020 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI AWARDS

Each year the Outstanding Alumni Awards acknowledge and celebrate USC graduates who have achieved significantly in their fields of expertise since graduating. Congratulations to this year's winners.

Colin Vale Outstanding Alumnus Award



Colin Vale graduated with an MBA from USC in 2010 while working on a fly-in fly-out basis and raising three sons (two of whom also graduated from USC) with his wife, Lynette, on the Sunshine Coast.

Under Colin's leadership as Executive Director of the Anitua Group on Lihir Island, Papua New Guinea (PNG), the organisation transformed into the most successful and largest landowner group of

companies in PNG. Growing to more than 4,500 staff and 20 companies, the industries range from mining, security, property and construction to camp management, retail, investments, logistics, farms and drilling. He also demonstrated his commitment to the people of PNG by introducing programs that resulted in a reduction of domestic violence on Lihir and raised awareness of this devastating issue across the country. The initiatives were so successful at Anitua that it became a national issue.

"I'm proud of what I managed to achieve in PNG and I picked up many strategies within my MBA that helped me along the way," he said.

After many years overseas, Colin returned home and has started a successful health and fitness centre on the Sunshine Coast with plans to franchise in the future.

Dr Krystina Lamb Rising Star Award



Dr Krystina Lamb is a leader in renewable and hydrogen energy technology research, currently working at the world class National Hydrogen Materials Reference Facility at Griffith University. After graduating from USC in 2016 with a PhD, as well as undergraduate and honours degrees in science, she has had a significant impact on promoting hydrogen technology in Australia,

receiving over \$2.3 million in research grants to date.

In 2018, she and her team at CSIRO demonstrated a world-first technology of producing ultrahigh purity hydrogen from ammonia to a crowd of over 200, including members of parliament, government, industry representatives and the media. Krystina has been actively involved in mentoring young scientists and STEM professionals. She has spoken at industry events such as Women in Engineering, organised conferences, and is a member of various committees.

"I know USC has produced so many different and talented people from so many different areas, so it's really exciting for my work to be recognised by my University among those people and professions," she said.

Raphael McGowan Regional Achievement Award



Since graduating from USC in 2010 with a Bachelor of Business, Raphael McGowan moved to Sydney and found his calling creating initiatives such as cycling and walking across the USA and Australia to raise awareness and funds to support research for melanoma skin cancer.

In 2017, Raphael returned to the Sunshine Coast to create his current business 'bakslap', a sunscreen

application device. The first product was designed, manufactured and launched with the involvement of over 30 USC students and is currently available in 88 retailers, including 44 locally. In 2019, bakslap won a Sunshine Coast Business Award for manufacturing, recognised for innovation and economic, social and environmental impact.

Raphael has also worked on campaigns with Facebook Australia and has voluntarily led national initiatives with the Melanoma Institute Australia raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for melanoma research.

"It was a life-changing experience coming to USC. I'm thankful I've been able to make an impact in this region and that so many people have been a part of it," he said.

Ali Couwenberg Rising Star Award



2010 Bachelor of Business (Tourism) graduate Ali Couwenberg (née Marshall) is a lead marketer for international property and infrastructure group Lendlease in Melbourne. Ali's career highlights include launching a \$350 million new build retail asset and she is currently leading the marketing and placemaking on Melbourne Quarter (MQ), a \$2.9 billion project identified as the city's most ambitious,

greenest, urban regeneration development yet.

"Ali's leadership has made a hugely positive contribution to the success of the project and in embedding MQ as a new city precinct that will transform the way people work and live in Melbourne," said Lendlease Development Director Brian Herlihy.

Ali has a passion for empowering females to explore employment opportunities in the industry, hosting a marketing workshop and guest speaking at a Property Council of Australia 'Girls in Property' program. She is an active mentor to Lendlease team members and has delivered a bespoke art installation at MQ to promote International Women's Day.

"It's a privilege to be announced as a winner, and it's a true testament to what you can achieve with a university degree," said Ali.

The science of wellbeing

BY LOUISE PEMBLE

LIVING through COVID-19 has been like a whole world experiment to see how humans might fare when deprived of social connection.

USC's Sunshine Coast Mind and Neuroscience-Thompson Institute (Thompson Institute) has stepped in to fill the breach now that we know the answer to that question – not very well, with a 30 percent jump in GP visits for mental health.

And Australia is not alone – a recent report by the World Health Organisation found that the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted or halted mental health services in 93 percent of countries worldwide while the demand for mental health is increasing. The WHO survey of 130 countries provides the first global data showing that over 60 percent of countries reported disruptions to mental health services for vulnerable people, including children and adolescents (72 percent) and older adults (70 percent) and 67 percent of countries saw disruptions to counselling and psychotherapies.

In Australia, AMA Queensland council member Dr Maria Boulton recently told the ABC that general practitioners were seeing a 30 percent increase in patients presenting with mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, eating disorders and stress.

To counter this "tsunami" of mental health need, the Thompson Institute launched a new program to boost wellbeing among Queenslanders called EMERALD (short for emerging anxiety, loneliness and depression).



With funding from the Queensland Government, EMERALD is free for people experiencing early signs that their mental wellbeing needs proactive attention.

Participants work with a health coach for eight weeks to set goals to improve mental health. They can also choose to see a dietitian, psychologist or exercise physiologist, depending on their goals. These are backed up with self-guided online teaching modules on sleep and social connectedness, among others.

Mental Health Nurse Research Officer Monique Jones said the first cohort had recently "graduated" from the EMERALD program – with marked improvements in their mental health and outlook on life.

"We are seeing incredible results from those who have completed the program, with much lower scores of self-rated depression and anxiety, and a stunning 40 percent increase in wellbeing from participants," Monique said.

"Feedback from participants included that they are coping better with stressors, have improved overall mood, are engaging in self-care activities and feel less overwhelmed."

EMERALD is open now to Queenslanders. Visit usc.edu.au/emerald to find out more and to register.

Another new Thompson Institute support service for people during the pandemic is free online suicide alertness training for anyone on the Sunshine Coast. As of late October, 235 people had completed the interactive training, called LivingWorks Start, via The Alliance for Suicide Prevention – Sunshine Coast, which is led by USC.

LivingWorks Start teaches how to recognise the signs that a person is having thoughts of suicide and how to connect them to intervention services.

The recent Australian Bureau of Statistics report Causes of Death Australia 2019 shows there is great need for this training. The report found that the rate of male suicide has increased by more than 2 percent over the past 10 years and is now the tenth leading cause of death for males with the youngest median age for any death in Australia at 43.9 years of age.

To register for LivingWorks Start training, visit thealliance.org.au/training/start/

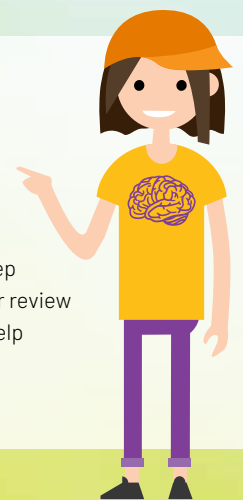
IMAGE: above The Thompson Institute's Mental Health Nurse Research Officer Monique Jones speaking about the EMERALD program.

WORLD-FIRST STUDY IS NOW RECRUITING

THE Thompson Institute's Longitudinal Adolescent Brain Study (LABS) is now recruiting. The only study of its kind in the world, LABS recruits adolescents aged 12 to 15 years and follows them through high school. The aim is to track changes in the brain to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that impact mental health in teenagers.

Through brain imaging, the Thompson Institute's researchers are getting new insights into factors that influence resilience, wellbeing, thinking skills, connectedness and mental disorders in teenagers. Already, they have found that sleep plays a big part in mental wellness. Other findings will be shared with the community soon, with several papers under peer review prior to publication. The research findings will inform future youth mental health. One day, the data may even be able to help identify young people at risk of developing mental disorders – giving time to intervene early for better lifelong outcomes.

➔ Register your interest to participate online at usc.edu.au/labs or phone +61 7 5456 3892.





Norm and Ellen de Chastel: igniting a transformative gift BY KATE EVANS

LAST summer, Norm and Ellen de Chastel read two articles in the 2019 edition of Ignite. The first was about their friends, Simon and Sandy Whittle who had generously put a bequest to USC in their Will and wanted to inspire others by sharing their story, and the second was about the establishment of the Sunshine Coast Mind and Neuroscience-Thompson Institute (Thompson Institute). These two articles “ignited” a spark in Norm and Ellen.

Ellen contacted the USC Development Office wanting to know more about the Thompson Institute. A meeting with Director, Professor Jim Lagopoulos, was arranged so that she and Norm could learn about the programs and research being undertaken at the Institute. Norm and Ellen were inspired with the ground-breaking research in healthy brain ageing, youth mental health, PTSD, and suicide prevention as described by Professor Lagopoulos.

“We were greatly taken by the range and scope of this very important branch of research and USC’s obvious commitment to and the belief in this important area,” said Norm.

After their meeting, Ellen and Norm generously donated \$100,000 to the Thompson Institute, knowing that their gift will enable research and provide services that will make a difference to the community they love.

In writing to Jim, the de Chastels expressed, “We hope this donation will assist with your work and perhaps take you one step further towards achieving those goals you have set.”

One hundred percent of the de Chastel’s donation goes directly to research at the Thompson Institute. Professor Lagopoulos personally thanked Norm and Ellen for their “incredible philanthropy” helping to “keep all our research programs operational” during the challenge of working in a post-COVID-19 world at the Thompson Institute.

Norm and Ellen have been quiet philanthropists on the Sunshine Coast often giving anonymously. However, they have made the decision to make their gift to the Thompson Institute known. “This way it may be that other potential donors may be inspired to follow suit,” said Ellen.

If you would like to make a transformative gift to USC

like Norm and Ellen, please let us know. Another way you may make a transformative donation to any of our USC programs is by leaving a bequest in your Will. For enquiries please contact Kate Evans on +61 7 5456 5136 or go to usc.edu.au/giving



The USC 1996 Society is a giving club that inspires conversations and action — not just about what is needed today, but about how philanthropists can shape and secure the future of higher education.

For more information about the USC 1996 Society contact Kate Evans on +61 7 5456 5136 or visit usc.edu.au/1996society



USC Mentoring

BY ANITA EDMONDS

AFTER a successful pilot in 2019, the USC Mentoring program has been made available to all students this year. Current students now have the opportunity to chat to USC alumni about their career experiences, increase their confidence, expand their networks and gain industry insights.

The online program has grown to more than 700 participants, including over 240 alumni volunteers, who have offered their time and expertise to students from all disciplines, year levels and campuses, whether undergraduate, postgraduate, domestic or international students. Most mentors received a five-star rating by students.

USC alumni guide students on their career path

"Amanda was amazing, she reassured me about everything I was worried about, she made me feel confident about my choice to pursue nursing and how to approach the future," said Tammy, student mentee.

Alumni have welcomed the opportunity to get involved and give back. "I have been very fortunate with my opportunities since graduation and I am absolutely willing to help students who may have questions about interviews, the work force or anything really," commented one mentor.

For more details about USC Mentoring, go to usc.edu.au/mentoring

Students affected by COVID-19 receive emergency support

WHILE COVID-19 changed many things this year, one area that remained unchanged at USC was the focus on students and their wellbeing. During the peak of the impact, many were doing it tough and for some the financial pressure affected their ability to meet basic needs, let alone continue with their studies.

USC Pro Vice-Chancellor (Students) Professor Denise Wood AM said many of the recipients had lost part-time work due to COVID-19 restrictions and were finding it hard to pay for food and rent.

"In response to this situation, we increased the number of emergency bursaries available to provide immediate financial support to approved students," she said.

USC provided more than 1,360 students with bursaries of up to \$1,000 each, totalling almost \$1.1 million.

The Student Emergency Bursary Appeal was also well received by USC staff, alumni, local businesses and individuals, with 180 supporters donating over \$54,000.

During June and July, over 6,000 free, ready-made meals were also distributed to students in need. USC's Student Wellbeing, Student Senate and Student Guild partnered with Study Sunshine Coast, Study Brisbane, OZ harvest, Food Bank and Food Share to provide this food relief.

The logistics to store, transport, and distribute the meals to students at each campus, reaching a peak of 1,000 meals a week, were considerable. Students were also provided with fresh vegetables and other groceries. The program continued throughout 2020 supporting students in financial distress.



IMAGE: above (L to R): Samuel Chee and Emily Wall (Student Guild), Alex Sharp (Student Wellbeing), Tracey Coobula (Study Sunshine Coast), and a Food Bank representative.

The joy of giving: Laurie Cowled

FROM humble beginnings on a country New South Wales sheep property during the Depression era, Laurie Cowled embarked on an extraordinary adventure, making a lasting difference along the way. In those days, there were few opportunities in rural areas and education for girls was often considered unnecessary. While dreams of becoming an actor, ballerina or an artist went unfulfilled for Ms Cowled, she found success in the male-dominated banking industry. Her biography, 'A Joyous Addiction', written by Michael Taylor, tells the story of how, through the generosity of one woman, many others can be empowered by the benefits of education and training that may not otherwise have been available to them.

Ms Cowled said she started making significant donations to institutions such as universities, the Australian Ballet School and NIDA in 2005 after her husband died. "We'd always said the last one would leave money to charity and I was the last one. My passion was education and I wanted to do things for country girls," she said.

Since 2011, Ms Cowled has funded prizes and study support bursaries at USC as well as her annual scholarship. She recently established a six-figure endowment to extend her annual USC scholarship that encourages regional and rural women to study science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) degrees. Ms Cowled is also donating the proceeds of her biography to the USC Laurie Cowled Regional Scholarship Fund.

"I turned 91 the other day and this makes me feel astonishingly young and vibrant," said Ms Cowled, who grew up on a farm outside Bethungra in New South Wales and first moved to the Sunshine Coast with her husband in 1984. "I get such a kick out of meeting and supporting these wonderful young women. They're so enthusiastic and skilled in areas once thought to be male provinces. They make me feel that Australia has a great future," she said.

Ms Cowled said she enjoyed staying in contact with students as they pursued their dreams. One was Sally Watson, who graduated with her USC Bachelor of Paramedic Science in 2018 and went straight into a coveted job with the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS). The 24-year-old now lives and works in Bundaberg.

"We like to keep in contact, send each other emails and postcards," said Ms Watson, who grew up at Charters Towers and enrolled at USC Sunshine Coast, receiving the Laurie Cowled Regional Scholarship. "It was daunting at first, moving from a smaller area and leaving behind family," she said. "But when I received the scholarship, I could focus on studying without stressing financially.

"It was easier to purchase things like textbooks and a stethoscope, as well as cover some costs when I completed three on-road practicums in Townsville, Caboolture and Vanuatu," she said. Ms Watson is now a qualified advanced care paramedic with QAS Bundaberg.

In reflecting on her astonishing life and future ambitions Ms Cowled said, "I am setting up this endowment fund so the scholarship can go on forever. I hope other people see the terrific pleasure you can get out of giving even a small amount, particularly if you're interested in educating the next generation."



IMAGES: **top** (L to R) Laurie Cowled with paramedic science graduate Sally Watson. **above** Laurie Cowled (left) and USC Director, Development Office Russell Ousley.



Coronavirus vaccine trials underway at USC

COVID-19 vaccine research, which previously was only conducted in Australia's major cities, is now being run by the USC Clinical Trials Centre on the Sunshine Coast and in Moreton Bay at the Sippy Downs and Health Hub Morayfield clinics. Principal investigators Associate Professor Sue Thackwray and Professor Scott Kitchener are overseeing the "healthy volunteers" clinical trial, which aims to identify the optimal dose and safety of a COVID-19 vaccine developed by US-based Novavax, Inc. "We are excited to be participating in worldwide research to find a vaccine against COVID-19, which is a serious and life-threatening disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus," Dr Thackwray said. USC Clinical Trials Director Lucas Litewka said the vaccine research forms an integral part of the centre's goal of bringing advanced treatments and breakthrough therapies to the region. For information about participating in a clinical trial go to usc.edu.au/trials



Lilli scoops design job at the Museum of Ice Cream

USC 2018 Design and Communication graduate Lilli Collingwood has sunk her teeth into a delectable new career in New York City at the Museum of Ice Cream. The three-month internship led to a full-time job, and Lilli is now the company's lead graphic designer in its marketing team, residing in Brooklyn. "I have a lot of creative freedom to test out new ideas. I've worked on campaign designs, newsletters, marketing activations and even designed a bright pink ice cream truck in Times Square," she said. And there were unexpected sprinkles on top for Lilli when one of her inspirational GIF stickers was reposted on Instagram by American celebrity Kim Kardashian. The Museum, which started several years ago as a pop-up business, has bases in New York and San Francisco. It aims to create interactive environments and sensory experiences "inspiring human connection through the universal power of ice cream," its website states.

USC law graduate named national Rising Star

WHEN COVID-19 restrictions closed the overseas study door on Sydney lawyer Michael Jefferies earlier this year, another two doors opened for the 2019 USC Bachelor of Laws/Bachelor of Commerce (Financial Planning) graduate. One was work for corporate and commercial law firm Hamilton Locke in Sydney, specialising in his preferred legal fields of Mergers and Acquisitions, Private Equity, and Capital Markets, and the other was to top another category in the Australian Law Awards – his third such win in a row. The USC Chancellor's Medallist was named Rising Star of the Year out of 10 finalists at the 2020 Australian Law Awards, presented by Lawyers Weekly. Michael said he was honoured to receive the national award, which recognises "the outstanding performance of lawyers who have excelled in their first few years of legal practice, with exceptional potential to fast-track their rise through their legal careers," he said.



USC earns five-star ratings in Good Universities Guide

USC has continued to score five-star ratings in key areas of student satisfaction in the 2021 edition of the Good Universities Guide. The Guide uses nationwide student and graduate surveys and national higher education data, to award five-star ratings to only the top 20 percent of Australian universities in each category. USC received awards across six categories – teaching quality (for the 15th consecutive year), overall experience (ninth consecutive year), learning resources (fifth consecutive year), skills development, social equity, and first generation. USC's Bachelor of Urban Design and Town Planning (Honours) also earned Australia's top result in the Architecture and Building field of study for overall experience, teaching quality and skills development and the highest results in Queensland in the field of Agriculture and Environmental Studies for overall experience, teaching quality, learner engagement, learning resources, skills development and starting salary.





Graduate twins cater to nutrition needs of Lightning

SARAH (above, left) and Emma Hayes (above, far right), identical twin sisters who graduated from USC in 2016 with Nutrition and Dietetics degrees, are celebrating the growing success of their business, Deliciously Clean Eats, which catered for the Sunshine Coast Lightning players during the Super Netball season this year. They started the business with entrepreneur and recipe book author Meagan Kellert (above, centre) after the trio chatted at a gym about their desire to promote healthy eating for people of all ages and fitness levels. The business now includes a dietitian-led, pre-packaged meals service covering the Sunshine Coast and northern Brisbane, a café at Kawana Sports Hub, and corporate catering contracts. "There is so much that goes on that no-one sees – rostering, ordering packaging and linen, meetings, transporting food, licensing and checking food standards," said Emma. "It's a hard slog but passion is the key to creating the dream."

New research centre to harness strengths across cultures

USC has launched the Indigenous and Transcultural Research Centre to foster a sharing of ideas across scientific disciplines and cultures in Australia and around the world, including First Nations peoples, migrants, refugees and culturally diverse communities. The team is led by three directors, Professor of Marketing Maria Raciti (centre), Professor of Education Research Catherine Manathunga (left) and Professor of Geography Jennifer Carter (right), all from USC. Key themes of the centre include knowledge systems, creative cultural practices and community capacity exchange. "For example, we have a new project around Indigenous foods and their potential in sustainable tourism, and we plan to draw on Indigenous approaches to doctoral education which includes the agency of country and the power of story and the ways that knowledge is developed across generations and cultures," Professor Manathunga said. The Indigenous and Transcultural Research Centre also offers opportunities for Higher Degree by Research students, early and mid-career researchers, research fellows and collaborating partners. For more information, visit usc.edu.au/itrc



Jonty secures a seat in Queensland State Parliament

USC business graduate and 2009 Outstanding Alumnus of the Year, Jonty Bush, was successfully elected to the Queensland State Parliament at the October state election as the Labor candidate for the seat of Cooper in Brisbane. For the past decade, following the homicides of her father and 19-year-old sister, Jonty has advocated for the rights of victims of violent crime. In 2009 she was recognised nationally as Young Australian of the Year, developing Queensland's One Punch Can Kill campaign. She became CEO of a state-wide victim support group, has worked on Ministerial taskforces, was appointed to Queensland's inaugural Sentencing Advisory Council and has a Masters in Criminology and Criminal Justice. "I'm extremely grateful and humbled to have the community's support. There's so much I want to do – I can't wait to get started," said Jonty.



USC provides free toolkit for job seekers

WITH COVID-19 lockdowns severely disrupting the Australian job market, the USC Business School has developed an online Employability Toolkit to help upskill people who are currently out of work, considering changing careers, interested in professional development or are about to enter the job market for the first time. Dean and Head of the USC Business School Professor Lorelle Frazer said the toolkit featured video interviews and included four modules that focussed on building and maintaining a personal brand, creating a personal website, using social media for job hunting, and developing job application materials and skills. "People may complete one or more of the online modules, depending on their interests, with those who complete all four to receive a certificate of completion," she said. The toolkit is available online at usc.edu.au/usc-employability-toolkit



Burp-free cow feed drives seaweed science at USC

BY JANELLE KIRKLAND



A puffy pink seaweed that can stop cows from burping out methane is being primed for mass farming by USC researchers.

AS food production has a significant carbon footprint, and the methane produced by ruminants, such as cows, sheep and goats, are a sizeable contributor to that footprint, the ability to greatly reduce or remove this emissions source is a potential game-changer.

In August this year, Professor of Marine Science Nick Paul, USC's Seaweed Research Group leader, featured in the third episode of ABC documentary *'Fight for Planet A: Our Climate Challenge'*. He was interviewed by host Craig Reucassel about his research and the enormous role that seaweed can play in reducing the cattle emissions that contribute to climate change.

The particular seaweed species, called *Asparagopsis*, grows prolifically off the Queensland Coast, and was the only seaweed found to have the effect in a study five years ago led by CSIRO.

"Seaweed is something that cows are known to eat. They will actually wander down to the beach and have a bit of a nibble," said Professor Paul.

"When added to cow feed at less than two percent of the dry matter, this particular seaweed completely knocks out methane production. It contains chemicals that reduce the microbes in the cows' stomachs that cause them to burp when they eat grass.

"If we can feed every cow in Australia, we could cut the country's greenhouse gas emissions by up to 10 percent. This new feed supplement can complement a range of other ways that the red meat industry is reducing its carbon footprint," he said.

The USC team is working at the Bribie Island Research Centre in Moreton Bay to learn more about how to grow the seaweed, with the goal of informing a scale-up of production that could supplement cow feed on a national or even global scale.

"Seaweed offers so many benefits, as a food source for people, as an immunity booster, for restoring the biodiversity of our coastlines, and storing carbon from the atmosphere. Seaweed aquaculture and industry in Australia can also provide many opportunities for jobs and economic growth and recovery. Our research team is excited to be working to understand and realise the enormous potential that seaweed can offer to the economy, the environment and communities everywhere," he said.

IMAGES: background Seaweed on Moffat Beach, Sunshine Coast. top left Dr Libby Swanepoel holding seaweed. bottom left (L to R) Members of USC's Seaweed Research Group: Professor Nick Paul, Dr Libby Swanepoel and Dr Alexandra Campbell. below (L to R) Professor Nick Paul with TV host Craig Reucassel while filming an episode for the ABC documentary *'Fight for Planet A: Our Climate Challenge'*.



The USC Seaweed Research Group improves environmental, economic and social outcomes through the production of world-class seaweed research and development. The group integrates diverse perspectives into their work from discipline areas such as marine science, aquaculture, molecular biology, ecology, business, health and biomedical science, social science and innovation to ensure the best-possible outcomes.



the last word

Kate Greenwood, archaeologist and cultural heritage consultant

Kate Greenwood graduated from USC with a Bachelor of Arts (major in environment and planning and a minor in politics and international relations) in 2007. In 2009 Kate established her own business, Greenwood Consultancy where she works with Traditional Custodians on cultural heritage projects.

Kate went on to study her postgraduate degree in archaeology at Flinders University and has been working as an archaeologist ever since.

Earlier this year Kate was awarded the title of Adjunct Research Fellow with the University of Queensland and is the current Assistant Treasurer with the Australia Archaeological Association.

Kate has worked on numerous projects, with her favourite being working with Kabi Kabi women to bring their traditional dilly bag weaving style back to Country.

Q&A

I grew up/went to school in... Cornwall in the UK and then Coffs Harbour.

When I was a kid I wanted to be... a National Geographic Photographer.

My first job was... a paper round. **Now I spend my days...** walking Country with Traditional Owners and researching. **I can't live without...** my family.

My proudest moment was... having Traditional Owners name an Aboriginal site I found after me. **The best advice I've been given is...** follow your dreams.

In other people, I value... honesty and trust. **It's daggy, but I love...** researching. **I'm currently reading/watching...** *Deep Time Dreaming* by Billy Griffiths.

My hidden talent is... fire twirling. **I'm hopeless at...** being patient. **One day I'd love to...** work with Indigenous people all around the world.



CIDSEL: Developing local and global communities for the future

USC's Centre for International Development, Social Entrepreneurship, and Leadership (CIDSEL) is a development agency committed to making a social impact through human capacity development.

CIDSEL works globally on development challenges and builds capacity in local communities. CIDSEL aims to be a positive influence in the change we want to see in the world and together build a better and inclusive society.

The centre is looking to engage with people from different disciplines, communities and with different insights to exchange knowledge, experiences, and ideas on how to accelerate development.



IMAGE: **above** Participants of CIDSEL programs. If you would like to be part of CIDSEL's knowledge hub and learn more about what they do, visit usc.edu.au/cidsel



Expanded USC Art Gallery reopens with historic exhibition

In late 2019, USC Art Gallery embarked on an ambitious capital works project made possible through the generosity of long-time USC supporter Arija Austin. In 2015, Mrs Austin bequeathed her and her late husband Richard 'Dick' Austin's substantial, personal art collection and a significant portion of their estate to USC.

This support allowed USC to undertake a redevelopment to increase its exhibition space, create a new reception area and construct additional storage for the growing USC Art Collection, doubling the Gallery's footprint overall. To honour the Austins, the newly constructed exhibition space has been named the 'Arija and Richard Austin Gallery'.



The USC Art Gallery will be open over the summer holidays with new exhibitions *Craftivism: Dissident Objects and Subversive Forms* and *Marian Tubbs: we need privacy guys here too* launching in late November. For more information visit

usc.edu.au/art-gallery

Michael Cook: Undiscovered

In August 2020 USC Art Gallery reopened its doors with Michael Cook: Undiscovered, the first career survey of this important Australian artist who has lived and worked on the Sunshine Coast for over 30 years. In 2009, Cook left a successful career as a commercial photographer to make art – a move driven by a desire to explore his Aboriginality.

Bringing together over 76 artworks made between 2010 and 2020, Michael Cook: Undiscovered was two years in development and drew together works held in the USC Art Collection, as well as loans from collections around Australia including: Monash University, the University of Queensland, Tweed Regional Gallery and Moreton Bay Regional Council. The exhibition highlighted Cook's ongoing interest in interrogating the legacy of colonisation in Australia.

In late 2020, USC Art Gallery will publish the artist's first monograph, *Michael Cook: 2010-2020*. Lushly illustrated, it will include over 120 full colour reproductions of Cook's artworks. Essays by Professor Marcia Langton from the University of Melbourne and USC Art Gallery Manager Megan Williams will sit alongside a foreword by USC Pro Vice-Chancellor (Engagement) Professor Joanne Scott and an interview with the artist by independent curator and writer Hamish Sawyer. The monograph will be available to purchase at the Gallery or online via the Gallery website.

IMAGES: above Installation view of Michael Cook: Undiscovered in the Arija and Richard Austin Gallery. left Redeveloped USC Art Gallery. Photos: Carl Warner.



Update your details Alumni, do we have your current email address? We'd like to update you on University news and opportunities to stay connected. ✉ Email alumni@usc.edu.au to update your details today.