

# Update from the VC

18 July 2014



## Colleagues

Warm congratulations to everyone involved in this week's NAIDOC celebrations. It is always great to see the wider community, our students and staff coming together to mark this important event. This year was exceptional, with Archie Roach headlining the Family Fun Days at Coffs Harbour, Lismore and the Gold Coast, attracting several hundred people onto our campuses. Thank you to the SCU Indigenous Events Co-ordinating Committee.

Preparations are under way to mark 20 years since SCU was established as an independent university, with our 20th Anniversary and Alumni Reunion event on campus at Lismore on August 30 from 11am-5pm. The event will be open to the community and we are hoping that our past and present students and staff, as well as community members and people interested in studying with us in 2015 will attend and sample what's on offer. Activities will include a contemporary music concert, visual arts exhibition, history display, health precinct, environmental science lectures and the opportunity for alumni to catch up and explore how much their alma mater has changed since graduation. We will be announcing the Alumnus and Young Alumnus of 2014, as well as Alumnus of the 20 years. The day is being co-ordinated by alumni relations manager Dan Sloan and the program can be found at [20years.scu.edu.au](http://20years.scu.edu.au)

Sea urchins and potentially cane toads have hit the headlines this week, with calls by Professor Philip Hayward, Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor (Research), for us all to start (carefully) eating these introduced pests, as a way of managing their impact on our natural ecosystems. Eating sea urchins which are greatly in demand in Asia, has been described by some as being 'kissed by the sea' - others say it's more like being 'dumped by the ocean'. The media interest, which included SBS television and ABC AM, was sparked by a journal article titled 'Invasive opportunities and eco-culinary activism – The Harvesting, Marketing and Consumption of Tasmanian Sea Urchins', in the journal *Locale: The Australasian-Pacific Journal of Regional Food Studies*.

I have been pleased to notice the efforts of LEXSA as it works with the University to improve student amenities on campus and for our distance education students. At Lismore campus the Enviro Collective Garden near the lake and Blackmores Walk is emerging as an attractive hub with plans to further develop it with a fire pit and pizza oven to expand its suitability as a venue for student functions. LEXSA has also been involved in catering when our distance education students have been on campus for intensive study. The Coffs Harbour Students' Association has done a great job running the Unibar and I was impressed when we used this venue for our Coffs Harbour alumni event earlier this year. At Gold Coast campus it has been pleasing to see more social events at lunch time in collaboration with Unilife, most recently, for Get Connected week with music, barbeques and social sport.

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SCU is once again supporting the Kokoda Challenge in the Gold Coast hinterland this weekend. 387 teams will trek the 96km from Mudgeeraba to Nerang including 52 school teams. A further 192 school teams will trek 48km from Numinbah to Nerang. On Saturday junior games are being held involving more than 300 scouts, girl guides and primary schools which SCU is also supporting. The Kokoda Challenge is the major fundraiser for the Kokoda Challenge Youth Program, for which Southern Cross University is Education Partner.

SCU won the 2014 Australian University Surfing Championships for the third time in four years after a tough contest at Newcastle's Bar Beach last week. Led by osteopathy student and former ASP World Tour professional Rebecca Woods, Team SCU won the men's and women's pennants as well as the overall trophy. A fantastic effort from the team of 10 surfers. Also, congratulations to Team SCU at last week's Northern University Games on the Sunshine Coast. SCU won the men's and women's singles tennis, women's golf, and the ten pin bowling competitions to come away with four gold medals. Special mention to the women's futsal team and the women's netball team who narrowly missed medals. Well done to all involved and to Unilife.

Finally, for those who follow the television show The Voice, contemporary music student Holly Tapp will not go through to the finals, after being knocked out this week. What a fantastic effort by Holly to make it that far.

**Peter Lee**  
**Vice Chancellor**