



ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

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Head of College Report

Jamie Moore

DECEMBER 2020

Greetings and Salutations Robbers far and wide

Well, what a year it has been!

The term "Operational Resilience" has been used with the consistency of "Hello" and forced us all to look at what Business as Usual really means.

The College started the year at close to capacity and was a vibrant and exciting place. With an amazing leadership team in place and what promised to be a fantastic new cohort we were humming along. Unfortunately, that only lasted for around 5 weeks before everyone was advised that the college would be closing and students encouraged to go home or reside in the 2 colleges earmarked to handle the remaining students.

Through this time the college worked hard to remain connected through forms of social media, zoom and the students adjusted, admirably, to the world of online learning. Most continuing students had experienced some forms of "online" through their degree but for our first-year students this posed a bigger problem. Suddenly being thrust from a college life back into home life, for some, meant they were then juggling work commitments with UNE work. However, through the use of different strategies of reducing study loads, deferring completely or just honing skills of time management students were able to put together a set of results that **wasn't** a reflection of the challenges they faced.

Our post-COVID return saw a reduced capacity and the college welcomed back around 80 students. With no social events, reduced capacities in common spaces and eating out of takeaway containers it was only the most stoic that remained. To the students' credit they were able to maintain a vibrant and well-connected community and, it is thanks to them, we will start 2021 in a position of strong recovery. Our sporting teams were decimated with the Rugby Club only able to field two teams, thanks to the long-distance support of some ex-Robbers and Friends of the college. Our netballers were able to put together four teams and had an extremely successful year with three titles and a runners up flag. Again, a credit, not only to our residents but our strong affiliate cohort also. Unfortunately, COVID put the brakes on our fundraising efforts. Kate Cleaver had the beginnings of a wonderful new idea, a naked cookbook, to offset the years of calendars but alas was unable to finish. Hopefully we can pick up where she left off in 2021.

Along with the disruption to college life, circumstances forced the cancellation of our 60-year celebrations. This was a real shame as it was to be a centerpiece of the Foundation's drive to the finish line for its scholarship fundraising. We will have a look at 2021 and see if there is an opportunity to bring the Robb community together and recognize the rich

fellowship that continues to be a hallmark of the Robb culture. As is the case with most of society all will be dictated by public health orders and government restrictions.

Even though it was a disrupted year for the students the Robb Machine continued to roll on and can I thank all those who remained concerned and connected to both the college and the students. From coaching to employment, from phone calls to Facebook the SCR remained an important part of the college experience. To Geoff Perry and the Foundation, they were able to launch the new scholarship pathway, initiate an industry based co-partnered scholarship (which included securing support for UNE research) and helped me to keep an eye on the future. Jack and the Alumni committee were hamstrung but at our AGM were able to gain some new committee members and look to further engage our most recent Alumni.

It was a very tough second half of the year for UNE with the initiation of a workforce change management process that saw them embark on wiping 20 million dollars from the payroll budget. This proved a stressful time for a lot of people but eventually, through two rounds of voluntary redundancies, almost 200 staff members moved on. This has flow on effects for all areas and residential saw their staff numbers drop by half including two Heads of College that will not be replaced. This has caused a major rethink on how we are to continue to offer an appropriate student experience on-campus and we will continue to work through options and scenarios until we find a model that works best.

The University has chosen to undertake a staged return to campus model which will see a continuation of largely online lectures and workload however there are negotiations currently underway to provide greater opportunities for face-to-face pracs for those subjects that need it.

Some good news, however is that we will be able to start 2021 aiming for capacity. I appreciate that there will be quite a few waiting to see how 2021 is shaping up but it is my expectation is that we will be pushing that figure.

I am looking forward to, hopefully, a more normal looking 2021 and can't wait to welcome the students back. I take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas, a COVID-safe festive period and a "normal" 2021.

Cheers

Jamie Moore - Head of Robb College



Amelia Ewart on her time at Robb College

[Watch Video](#)



Robb College Foundation Report

Geoff Perry

Merry Christmas Robb Alumni... and farewell to 2020 and all that...

Congratulations to our 60th Anniversary Scholars in 2020

sinclair-Wilson



1st Year Student
William Archer
Goondiwindi
B. Agribusiness

Leadership



2nd Year Student
Brigitte Berkery
Sydney
B. Nursing

Darren Ellis



3rd Year Student
Josh Jones
Dubbo
B. Ag/Business

Whalley Senior Fellow:



Final Year Student
Kate Cleaver
Nyngan
B. Business

We were delighted we were able to launch our new pathway and extend our scholarships to these young Robbers during this difficult year. They have all expressed their sincere thanks to the Foundation and our Donors for supporting them whether they were in College or studying from home. The funds assisted them during the disruption to set up equipment at home and this year they had to complete their exams online.

"After hearing the story as for why this scholarship is available it has made me feel extremely honoured to receive it and has highlighted what characteristics makes a Robber. The scholarship has helped relieve the financial stress that is accompanied with university studies. Usually I spend a lot of my time working to afford Uni but this scholarship has enabled me to focus instead on my studies" **Josh Jones.**

A big thank you to the 60 Robb Alumni and SCR members who have contributed to achieve this result. We now must try to maintain some momentum during this difficult time to raise the 2nd leg by end of 2022.

Progress of Appeal Currently we have over \$650,000 in scholarship funds and we are hopeful we can reach at least \$800,000 by end of 2021. We have lowered our target a bit due to having to cancel our plans this year for dinners, reunions and events such as the Rural Focus Symposium. If we can reach this target we can launch two new scholarships, to have two scholarships for each year in College commencing 2022.

Appeal to employers for Co-operative funding and work experience In August the Board moved to invite employers to joint fund our scholarships to help accelerate the number we can offer plus provide a program of work experience. We were delighted that Octopus Investments, one of the largest renewable energy companies in the world, has joined with us as our inaugural donor-partner to commence this program in 2021. Details can be found on our website and we are seeking more employers to join us.

Call to fund new IRVINE Scholarship in tribute to the 3rd Master of College

Dr Jim and Sue Irvine headed Robb for 10 years in the 80's. They implemented big, brave initiatives with the students which helped to keep the College full for years and established many traditions that are still continued today. Both Jim and Sue are Life Members of just

about everything in Robb and are still keen supporters of the College. Articles and memoirs from Jim can be found on the History page on the Alumni website.

I am asking more Alumni to please donate to these scholarships and help us raise the next "leg" of our appeal to commence our 2nd pathway. These funds will assist students in perpetuity plus they are helping to build a stronger foundation that is helping to secure the future of the College.

Please make a donation by going to our website at www.robbcollege.com/donate

On behalf of our Board I wish you all a safe and enjoyable Christmas and New Year.

Thank you

Geoff Perry - Chairman, Robb College Foundation Association

**Feeling generous? Make a donation
and give a UNE student a special gift!**

As we head into the festive season we ask you to support our students by making a tax-deductible donation to the Robb College Scholarships Appeal.

[Donate Now](#)



Robb College Alumni Association President

Jack Grant

2020 – a year like any other has brought with it challenges that had not been experienced before. Unfortunately, due to the restrictions imposed with COVID-19, the numerous functions that were scheduled to celebrate the 60th year of the College have had to be postponed.

The other goal we did have was to have a function for the college members in their final year of their courses to introduce them into the Alumni Association. This was unable to occur, with many of these students deciding not to return to Robb College. At the end of the final Trimester, I still hope to be able to welcome all leaving College members with an email/letter to the Robb College Alumni Association in a hope to generate interest with the younger members immediately after leaving college.

With these functions being the main foundation of generating further interest in the College within the Robb College Alumni Community, it was sad to have these delayed until a future time. I hope that the Robb College Alumni Association will be able to host some type of event in 2021.

Looking into the 2021 and beyond, the committee has three main goals:

- Generate interest and involvement of younger members of the Robb College Alumni Association - It would be fantastic see more Alumni members who have graduated within the past 15-20 years involved in the committee. This would

certainly help with communicating information to more people, along with providing a better succession path for the Association's committee members into the future.

- Once restrictions ease, help the College move forward with functions to celebrate the 60 years of Robb College - Use our networks and various social media avenues to advertise these events, and certainly look to host our own.
- Assist current students with employment opportunities using our own various networks - We have such a diverse range of employment with our current Robb College Alumni Association members that we should be using to assist these students in transitioning from University to professional careers. I truly believe this should be one of the biggest focus points for the Robb College Alumni - not just next year but every year.

I wish like to thank those who were part of the Robb College Alumni Committee in 2020, and welcome the new team for 2021:

- Vice President: Darcy Anderson
- Secretary: Jamie Moore
- Treasurer and Public Officer: Geoff Perry

I would also like to welcome Jamie King, Wal Whalley and John Nash who have offered to assist as general committee members. I look forward to working with you all in the coming year.

Jack Grant

President of Robb College Alumni Association

Robb College Alumni in the news



Charlie Arnott

As a Robb College alumnus and the bearded, bandana-wearing poster child for the regenerative farming movement, Charlie Arnott's Rural Science studies at UNE in the early 1990s seem a little at odds with his current farming philosophy.

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James Cleaver

James Cleaver could hardly have chosen a more challenging time to leave his comfortable job as a Dubbo solicitor and join the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) as a rural support worker. It was April 2018 and drought's grip on the state had tightened to a stranglehold. Concerns for the health and wellbeing of farming families were at an all-time high.

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Doug Daft

Doug Daft, former global head of Coca-Cola and UNE alumnus, has been appointed as one of the University's Honorary Doctorates. A resident of Robb College, he recalls a life of living, sleeping and studying within the UNE grounds in days when High Tea was still taken in the college dining room.

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Peter Drysdale

From Canberra to Tokyo and Beijing to Delhi, his name is known in the highest echelons of government. For 50 years he has contributed to some of Australia's most sensitive and enduring economic partnerships in the Asia-Pacific, earning him such accolades as Japan's Order of the Rising Sun, the Asia Pacific Prize and the coveted Weary Dunlop Asia Medal.

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Fanny Lumsden

UNE and Robb College alumna Edwina (Fanny) Lumsden has won the Best Country Album at the 2020 ARIA Awards. Fanny is an Australian country music singer and songwriter. Hailing from Tooma, she was nominated for an ARIA award this year for her latest album, Fallow, which was written and recorded in the Tooma valley.

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Andrew McConville

As coal-fired power stations are progressively retired and Australia grapples with its transition to renewable energy production, UNE alumnus Andrew McConville is charting a slightly different path forward.

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Catherine Marriott

Catherine Marriott has been appointed as the inaugural Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Riverine Plains. She is also UNE's 2019 Distinguished Alumni Award winner, a graduate of the Australian Rural Leadership Program and was the 2012 WA Rural Women of the Year.

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Allan Vagg

Allan Vagg is from Hillston in western NSW. He attended Robb in early 2010's and completed a Degree in Rural Science at UNE. He and his dad with other family "poet" members have raised \$100,000 for dementia research through selling their book of bush poetry.

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Don Walker

Lyricist Don Walker, whose work is the soundtrack for a generation of Australians, has been awarded a UNE Honorary Doctorate. He was a founding member of the band Cold Chisel, contributing vocals, playing keyboards, and becoming the writer whose songs lifted the band out of pubs into mythology.

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Current Robb Students



James Gavin

Double degree student James Gavin speaks about his time at UNE and Robb College - "The positive environment of Robb College with other students studying similar degrees has helped provide guidance to me throughout my degree".

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Stay connected



Let us know where you are

It may have been a long time since you were at UNE but we want to **stay in touch!**

Update your details online with the **UNE Alumni office** so we can let you know about events, activities and news.

CLICK HERE

If you have a friend or colleague who attended Robb College and didn't receive this e-newsletter please forward it on to them and ask them to [update their details online](#).

Moved house recently? Changed jobs? Please [update your details](#).

NOTE: If you have completed this form in the past 5-10 days, we'll be processing your update shortly, so no need to complete the form again.

You are receiving this email because you are a UNE graduate, friend or donor who attended Robb College. If you think we have made a mistake, or you no longer wish to receive any email communication from our office, please use the 'Unsubscribe' link below. If you'd like to simply unsubscribe from this e-Newsletter specifically, email advance@une.edu.au or phone 02 6773 2870.

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