



sun news

EOFY UPDATE

Winter 2020

EOFY UPDATE

Katie's story inspires
incredible generosity for
Schools Ministry Fund

INNOVATION IN SCHOOLS

Ministry creativity wins
amidst the pandemic

COVID-19 MINISTRY UPDATES

Whatever it takes,
wherever it's needed,
getting the Gospel out
in all seasons

More stories online!

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THE WORD HE HAS SENT OUT WILL NOT RETURN EMPTY

ISAIAH 55:11



What happens when a passionate, mission-minded movement faces a devastating pandemic that challenges the long-held and unquestioned belief that effective outreach and discipleship relies on face-to-face ministry?

“‘I tell you,’ he replied, ‘if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.’” (Luke 19:40)

It should be no surprise that our response to COVID-19 has been to pray and then to get creative. And not just a little creative, a lot creative. Why? Because SU has always been at its best—its very best—when we have prayerfully sought to imitate our Creator God in all of *His* creativity, in order to develop new and innovative ways of sharing the Good News about His Son, Jesus, in all seasons.

We rejoice that God has chosen to use our creative DNA to help advance His Kingdom across NSW at this time. As we continue to navigate this season, we praise God that we can commit all our labours and ministry dreams to His faithfulness, sovereignty and providence knowing that the Word He has sent out will not return empty (Isaiah 55:11).

I am confident you will enjoy reading this issue of SU News. You will notice it's not only jam-packed with testimonies of Gospel transformation from across the field, but also the story of how, since the pandemic first hit our shores, we have changed gears to focus on increased collaboration across the movement in order to ensure children, youth and families in NSW could still hear the message of Gospel hope and be encouraged and equipped

to grow in their Christian maturity, safely, during this season of social but not relational-distancing.

Almost overnight, there was an opportunity to share information and resources not only with our SU brothers and sisters across Australia, but also with the SU international family as well, like no other time I can previously remember in my thirty years of SU involvement.

In NSW, this collaboration has seen the development of brand new, high-quality resources including: *SUPA TV*, *YouVersion* resources online, Virtual Camps ... and much more. I don't underestimate that it has been, and continues to be, a difficult and challenging time for so many in our country and overseas, however, I am more than delighted to share with you the raft of new resources and ministry initiatives littered through the pages of this SU News.

I am also keen to pass on a personal and heartfelt “thank you” to those who generously gave to the *Scripture Union NSW EOFY Appeal 2020*, especially in the midst of uncertain times (read more, page 4). Indeed, that is exactly how so many of you have responded, with “glad and cheerful hearts” (2 Corinthians 9:6-7). It's not too late to give! You can help SU reach more by donating today at: sunsw.org.au/donate!

As we move forward, faithful in prayer and active in mission, will you please continue to pray that God will:

- Guide and lead us as we are eager to make a sound decision about the proposal to merge into a national SU group.
- Inspire the Board of Directors as they govern the movement in increasingly uncertain times;
- Equip volunteers (who do the vast majority of heavy-lifting when it comes to grass-roots ministry at the coalface), as they share with children, young people and their families the certain hope we have in Jesus.



Glenn Coombs

Interim State Director, Scripture Union NSW

Image: Above & Beyond Day Camp, South Coast NSW



THANK YOU!



We've been delighted by the heart-warming responses to Katie's story (see over page) throughout the EOFY Appeal, with several long-time supporters calling up to give *in addition* to their regular donations, and sharing their love for SU ministry in the process. Here are just a few examples we couldn't wait to share with you:

"I have supported Scripture Union for over 40 years as I believe their work in schools is so vital, including encouraging people to regularly read the Bible."

- Margaret C

When Margaret heard Katie's story, she was so moved she phoned the office to make an additional donation to the SU *Schools Ministry Fund*, the focus of our 2020 EOFY Appeal. Read about Katie over the page!



Pictured (left): Lily had an amazing time at *SU Schoolies in Vanuatu*. Thanks to generous supporters, SU is able to offer a range of experiences like this at affordable prices for young Christians seeking to honour God in life and ministry as they approach adulthood.



"SU is on the front-line of vital ministries, but we need a new generation of young Christians to be active in leadership. So of course I am a willing financial and prayer supporter!"

- Brian B

Brian is ninety years of age and has been a keen supporter of Scripture Union for many years, as well as a long-time reader of *SU Reading Notes* (Brian also worked for Anzea Bookhouse Ltd. which published *SU Reading Notes* for a time)!

When Brian's daughter, Jillian, volunteered at *Sawtell Beach Mission* about forty years ago, he saw how SU ministries reach thousands every year and, at his church, has been an encourager of young people to engage in mission over the years. Brian says, "The dedication and enthusiasm of these young people has been wonderful."

Back home in Sydney, Brian praises SU Schools Ministry in Epping Boys High School and Cheltenham Girls High School. He says, "Our church supports Chaplains here, and I know they value the encouragement of SU very much."

We're so thankful for our donors. If you've supported SU and would like to inspire others, please email: info@sunsw.org.au.

"I used Scripture Union Bible Reading Guides for over 60 years and still receive *Encounter With God* and read it daily. I love that everything SU does revolves around encouraging people to read God's Word. I have been a financial supporter for so many years because I find them to be such a worthwhile movement."

- Helen H

Helen, now in her eighties, has a long and vibrant SU history. Helen's SU story begins with the ISCF group at her school in the late 1950's, early 1960's. This led to her involvement in SU Camps, as well as *SUFM* (then known as *Beach Mission*).

After school, Helen went on to Teachers College. Following her training, she was transferred out to Western NSW to teach in Orange and Blayney. It was here that she started ISCF groups of her own. Helen also produced ISCF newsletters and helped start a *Girls Ag Camp*, which ran the week after the *Boys Ag Camp*. She was even involved in developing a cook book, called *Ministry to the Interior*, for Camps and SUFM!

Helen loves hearing about the work with young people in some of the country towns where she worked and lived, and is particularly grateful that SU has placed workers on the ground in regional NSW. Helen said, "I would encourage anyone that could, to consider supporting Scripture Union financially so that they can continue their great work."

If you'd still like to support SU Schools Ministry, you can go to sunsw.org.au/donate or phone (02) 9638 9000!



EOFY APPEAL 2020 UPDATE



Thank you for helping us raise important funds to bring the Good News of Jesus to school students like Katie! You can hear Katie's full story at:
sunsw.org.au/donate

We understand it's been a difficult time for many as COVID-19 turned our lives upside down. Despite serious challenges, together we raised an amazing \$414,382 in gifts and pledges for our Schools Ministry Fund! Interim State Director, Glenn Coombs, reports:

That means more young people, like sixteen-year-old Katie, will have the opportunity to discover their true self-worth and belonging in the God who loves them and gave his only Son. We are so grateful to have such dedicated supporters like you!

Special thanks to the small group of kind supporters who were cheerfully willing to contribute to our matching fund and double the value of donations from other supporters.

If you didn't get a chance to give and you'd like to support our ministry to schools in NSW, you can still donate at sunsw.org.au/donate or call us on (02) 9638 9000. Thank you!

Thank you for the incredible generosity you showed by supporting SU Schools Ministry into the future!



“What does it mean to be a Christian?”

SU Schools Ministry is an opportunity to guide the next generation as they wrestle with the challenges of High School and develop their own sense of identity and faith in this world. In our fast-paced culture, I think it can be hard for young people to find the time to think through who they are and why they are here. So it's a real privilege to work alongside the next generation at ISCF as they think through what it means to be a Christian in the world today, and such an encouragement to see the passion that many of the students have to know, follow and share the love of Jesus.

Nicolas Volunteer
Northern Sydney ISCF

See page 11 for an interview with Nicolas!

ISCF has been instrumental in shaping me into the leader I am today. Belonging to this community has been a place of great support. School can be tough, so it's always comforting to know there's a group of people behind you.

Taylah Student
South Coast Region ISCF

Read more: sunsw.org.au/taylah



Doctors have discovered something wrong with my lungs, so I'm taking Term 3 off to find out more and so that my ISCF group can continue uninterrupted under a healthier teacher. I know I have a heavenly assurance. On the other hand, I have loved my job and wanted to be a little old lady teaching students about Jesus for 50 years! I guess I got halfway there and whatever the future holds, I know it is God's work, not mine. I have felt privileged to share my Jesus with so many students over the years and can't wait to see who stands with me before the throne on that last day, with our perfect resurrection bodies that will never get sick or sore.

Jeannine Volunteer
St George Region ISCF

Read more: sunsw.org.au/jeannine



When Sam came to SUPA Club he brought friends with him every week. Now in High School, he's wanted to be a student ISCF leader since day one, and recently invited almost everyone in his grade! It's super encouraging to see students so impacted by Jesus they take the initiative to talk with their friends and invite them along. It encourages me to press on, because God is at work.

Evan Volunteer
North West Sydney ISCF

Read more: sunsw.org.au/evan



Some students are the first believers in their families. Their courageous testimonies, and continued faith, has been an inspiration to us all in the group.

Dharshana Volunteer
North West Sydney ISCF

Read more: sunsw.org.au/dharshana



Young people are searching for identity

So being able to share the Gospel message of hope in Christ with the young people who attend the group has been the greatest privilege.

Lisa Volunteer
Central Coast Region ISCF

Read more: sunsw.org.au/lisa



I go to SUPA Club because it's fun learning about God through games, prayer and memory verses

Emily Student
North West Region SUPA Club



Here are just some of the encouraging stories from Schools Ministry, that your support makes possible every day!



Right: Eugenie is an ISCF student leader in Illawarra NSW.



INNOVATION IN MINISTRY



Due to the restrictions that have been put in place for COVID-19, our *SUPA Clubs* and *ISCF School* lunchtime groups have been unable to meet and explore God's Word together. This has, however, provided a space for us to explore different ways of assisting children, young people and families to meet with God daily through Bible reading and prayer. Adam Smyth reports:

SUPA TV launches

One of these new ventures has been *SUPA TV* which is a fun, interactive online series for primary-aged children and their families to connect with God through games, songs and Bible stories. Series one contains four episodes exploring 'God's big plans for little people' in the Bible, and how He has big plans for little people today too! Check it out at: sunsw.org.au/supa-tv.

YouVersion reaches 40K

We've also been so excited to see God using our Bible resources in extraordinary ways! Partnering with *YouVersion*, many of our most loved Bible engagement resources can now be accessed on the *YouVersion* app and website!

In the short time they have been available, we have already seen over 40K subscriptions! At a time when meeting together has been difficult, this has been a huge blessing!

It is remarkable how God has used these resources and this online platform to reach primary and high school ages, as well as adults, not just in NSW or throughout Australia but also in over 100 countries around the globe.

"God is close to us in this time, as He is in all others."

Looking ahead

The *SUPA Son of God Tract* drawing competition is currently underway for our upcoming *SUPA* tract about Jesus. Winners will have their drawings included! Also, keep an eye out for our new devotional for adults, called *Sharing God*, on *YouVersion* as well as a primary-aged version of our very popular *CHAT-A-BOX* topic card series and, coming soon, a new video resource for teens, exploring the Book of Luke!

Throughout all of this, I am reminded that God never leaves us, and He never forsakes us (Hebrews 13:5). He is close to us in this time, as He is in all others. His word is powerful, and we can trust Him to continue to touch hearts whatever the circumstances may be, as we joyfully proclaim the Good News of Jesus. What a great God we serve!

You can find information on all our resources at: sunsw.org.au/resources.

The *SUPA Son of God Tract* drawing competition is open to children in NSW under the age of 13. Details at sunsw.org.au/supa-tract-competition. Submit your entry now!



"Sitting still doesn't come naturally in our family! So Bible time around the dinner table usually ends badly. **SUPA TV** gave us an alternative that worked. Punchy, well made and interesting enough to keep our three children engaged. Win!"

- Lane family



**FUN
FUN
FUN**

YouVersion resources:

Help someone engage with the Bible today!

On a smartphone or tablet: download the YouVersion app, click on 'Plans', click on 'Find Plans,' then search for any of the resources on this page. On a computer: type in any of the urls on this page.

Kids

Who Do You Say I AM? - sunsw.org.au/yv1

Stories of the Kingdom - sunsw.org.au/yv2

Adults

The Love of God - sunsw.org.au/yv3

Connection with God - sunsw.org.au/yv4

NEW! Sharing God - sunsw.org.au/yv16



Teens

A Step of Faith - sunsw.org.au/yv5

Jonah - sunsw.org.au/yv6

The One Behind the Book - sunsw.org.au/yv7

A Recklessly Extravagant Love - sunsw.org.au/yv8

CHAT-A-BOX (Topic Series):

Connecting with God sunsw.org.au/yv9

Being Human - sunsw.org.au/yv10

Relationships - sunsw.org.au/yv11

Living for God - sunsw.org.au/yv12

Everyday Life - sunsw.org.au/yv13

The Power and Love of God - sunsw.org.au/yv14

Heaven and Earth - sunsw.org.au/yv15



MINISTRY UPDATE

Even though this year has brought many challenges to SU ministries, we have found that God is still well and truly on the move and opening up plenty of exciting opportunities:

A note from the Board

We are eager to make a sound decision about the proposal to merge into a national SU group. COVID-19 has slowed discussions at a national level, however, the time has come for our movement to make important decisions about our future.

The Board plan to present clear options to our AGM on October 26th and enable governing members to vote on whether to stay as a separate Mission entity or to merge with the other States and Territories. We will be communicating throughout August and September with our governing members and seeking their feedback before taking options to the AGM for a vote. If you would like to vote on our future at the AGM, please join up and become a Governing Member today: sunsw.org.au/become-a-member.

Working together for the Kingdom

Key staff and volunteers from across SU state and territory Movements are currently engaged in collaborative discussions to identify shared resources and information that will allow ministry to continue safely at this time. Already, this has seen the première of a range of online *Camps* in many States (including NSW), as well as research and development into our leadership training, as we seek to meet critical Gospel needs within our communities into the future by mentoring emerging young Christian leaders for life and ministry. Praise God also for this opportunity to see relationships flourishing across SU as we work together in this way.



MEET PETER

Given the impact of COVID-19 on ministry in NSW, Peter Stone has agreed to step down from the Board to re-join staff in support of Interim State Director, Glenn Coombs, as they look to the future.

Peter became a Christian at an *ISCF* camp in his first year of High School (1968). "I went to that camp because *ISCF* was the only place where the older boys in my school treated us with interest and respect." Today he knows this was the love of Jesus.

Peter went on to serve as *ISCF* leader, Junior Officer at *SU Camps*, Camp Director and *SUFM* Team Leader. He was on staff for ten years as Camps Coordinator, Training Director and Associate State Director. And most recently, has been a Board Director.

"SU holds a special place in my heart. It provided the people and places that led me to Jesus, helped me grow in my faith, learn my gifts and gave me opportunities to serve and lead. I am thrilled to have this opportunity to serve again in this very focused role."

Peter's qualifications in adult education, theology and business administration as well as a career spanning the public sector, professional services, financial services and consulting will be an invaluable asset as we review strategy, develop key operational plans, build capability and sharpen our focus on fulfilling the distinctive mission SU has in NSW moving forwards.



Summer Missions 2020-21

As we eagerly look ahead and hope for upcoming mission season, we must remind ourselves: we work with Churches, and therefore need to strengthen our relationship within the communities we minister. The question on our mind needs to be, "How can we reach and disciple every child, young person and family?" not, "How do we run a mission?"

SU Camps adapt and evolve

SU NSW staff and volunteers are thinking hard about what our Spring Camps will look like. It seems probable that many can go ahead if the curve stays flat. Please pray! There will be adjustments to make, and some hard work ahead, please pray that God will provide the faith, wisdom, and flexibility His people will need!

Leadership Conference Springwood was held recently as a two day online event, but plans to run normally next year. Meanwhile, Leadership Conference Tamworth plans to move from July to October this year, most likely at Lake Keepit.

Check sunsww.org.au/camps for latest SU Camps and also facebook/sunsww for updates!

Kids to Camp funding for those hit hard by the drought

We're keen to resume *SU Camps*, including to bless families via the *Kids to Camp* appeal! Over 90% of NSW remains in drought. It will take years of good seasons to put rural NSW back into a strong position, and we are thankful to be able to support families via these sponsorships over the coming period, and well into 2021.

COMMUNITY



Farewell and Giving Thanks

It was with sadness staff recently farewelled Bryce Steep (*pictured right*), who has been our Mid North Coast Regional Coordinator since January 2018.

Bryce will continue to work in the region in the funeral industry, and is undertaking further study as well.

Please join us in thanking God for the hard and faithful work which Bryce contributed throughout this time. Bryce is a man of impressive Christian character, great

friendliness, and gentleness. Staff will miss him, though we are happy that he is keen to continue as a volunteer wherever possible. He will be especially missed by summer Missions, and North Coast Junior Ag Camp, who loved his enthusiasm and his constant encouragement.

Please pray that the groundwork laid by Bryce (including towards a soccer Camp) will be blessed by our great God, and that Bryce can long continue to shine for Jesus on the beautiful Mid North Coast of NSW.



A Call to Prayer

Staff and volunteers quickly collaborated to establish the *Call To Prayer* event earlier this year, that saw hundreds of people across NSW, Australia (and even some from overseas) gather online to pray amidst COVID-19. SU volunteer, Mike Hastie (who led the event), reports:

I believe God often works his most glorious ways in the darkest times. This prompted me to seek opportunity in the recent pandemic season and God showed me a vision of Christians across a multitude of churches gathering to pray and seek Him. Scripture Union with its desire to see people meet God in daily bible reading and prayer, to work with the churches and to empower volunteer leadership and innovation was ideally positioned to grab hold of this vision. It was so powerful to see people from farms, rural centres and cities lament, intercede, praise and hope together for Jesus' glory.

Inspired to pray? Join us at Tea & Prayer (monthly)! Event details at: sunsw.org.au/tea-and-prayer.

SU Spring Camps are coming up!



Due to COVID-29, Camps were delayed but we are hopeful many can run this Spring. Check out what's on at: sunsw.org.au/camps.

Sign-up to ministry news from your region!

Keeping up with what's happening across the SU Movement in your region is easy, just get in touch with your Regional Coordinator and let them know you'd like to start receiving their newsletter!

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VOLUNTEER STORY

**"I'VE
NEVER
FELT
LOVE
LIKE
THIS."**

Image (top): Nicolas McInerney with 2015 graduates and ISCF leaders. From left to right: Adam Garth, Kiatin Williamson, (Nicolas) and David Todd.

Left: Hollie is a real leader in her local school. You can read her inspirational story here: sunsw.org.au/hollie

Nicolas McInerney has led an *ISCF* lunchtime group for the past eight years. We asked him:

How have you seen God working through your *ISCF* group?

A stand-out memory would have to be from one of the annual camps we hold with the local girls High School. I asked one of the girls what she thought of the camp and she replied, "It's amazing. I only wish I'd starting coming sooner." I asked her why and— I'll never forget her reply —she said, "I've never felt love like this before." It blew me away and was a testament to the community our students and leaders had created. Seeing the impact loving Christian community can have on young people continues to be a real joy to me.

How have you personally been impacted through this ministry?

In so many ways! I would say the relationships I've made with students over the years, particularly the leaders, has been a real blessing. I'm still in touch with many of them and now call them my friends. Leading has by no means been a one way street. A few years ago I had cancer and a bunch of them rocked up at my house, unannounced, and surprised me with their heads shaved in solidarity (pictured above). How good is that?

To volunteer, get in touch with your regional team member. Head to sunsw.org.au/schools for details!

Full interview at: sunsw.org.au/nicolas

Were there particular people who impacted your journey to faith?

I didn't grow up in church and stumbled my way into one in Year 12, checking it out with a friend. I was immediately impacted by the love and generosity I encountered and this left a significant impression on me. I initially went with the intention of dismissing it all as nonsense, however, the deeper I went the more I discovered there was far more to Jesus than I thought.

What do you do during the week?

I'm a full-time Chaplain and I do my best to serve the school community in many and varied ways. I attend Epping Baptist Church with my wife and two beautiful boys (two and four years old) and, between my family and work, there's a *little time* left over for a bit of sport!

What encouragement would you give to someone thinking about volunteering with SU?

Do it! It's such a great way to encourage the next generation of leaders and potentially forge lifelong relationships. It truly is a joy and privilege to be involved in *ISCF* and work with the passion and energy of our young people.

It's also very satisfying knowing you are sewing seeds that can have an eternal impact, and that you have the support, wisdom and experience of SU behind you.

If you'd still like to support SU Schools Ministry, you can go to sunsw.org.au/donate or phone (02) 9638 9000!

SU resources are now available on *YouVersion*!



Many of our most loved Bible engagement resources can now be accessed through the *YouVersion* app and website.



"Receiving notifications on the YouVersion app encourages me to read more of my Bible and be accountable to my friends who also use the app."

Caitlyn (16), Blayney NSW

Read more, page 6.

If you'd like to support the development of Bible resources into the future, please consider making a donation today!

Donate today!
sunsw.org.au/donate



Patron Rev. Simon Flinders
Board Chair Robyn Gillespie
Interim State Director
Glenn Coombs

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SU NSW is a community of 3,000 volunteers and a small support team serving through local ministries including camps, summer missions, school lunchtime groups, leadership development and the production of resources for outreach and discipleship.

Our mission is to encourage people to meet God daily through the Bible and prayer so they may come to personal faith, grow in Christian maturity and become both committed church members and servants of a world in need. Read more at: sunsw.org.au/abwp.

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