



# SU News

SUMMER 2023

## Breaking Hard Ground

MISSIONS EDITION

- 04 One week, big boost
- 06 Sharing the Good News with young people
- 08 Igniting Gospel Ministry in Rural NSW



# Breaking hard ground for the gospel

**One of Jesus' favourite commands is to "Go."**

In Matthew 28, he says, "Go, make disciples." In Mark 5, it's "Go home to your own people." Mark 10, "Go, your faith has healed you." Matthew 21, "Go to the village ahead of you." Luke 9, "Go and preach the coming of the Kingdom." Luke 10, "Go, I am sending you out like lambs."

Go is a call to action, demanding movement. It seems you can't truly follow Jesus without going. Staying is safe and comfortable. Going requires risk and hard work; it's costly. Yet, it's in the going that God works. It's where the Good News of Jesus is shared, and lives are transformed, both for those who receive the message and those who deliver it.

As summer nears, over 1,140 volunteers are getting ready for mission. From Byron Bay at the northern NSW boarder to Lake Tabourie down south - 26 Beach Mission teams are uniting to spread the Good News to children, youth, and families.

Scripture Union Missions have evolved over the years, starting with the first Australian Beach Mission on Manly Beach in 1888. What has remained unchanged is our unwavering commitment to follow Jesus' command and to prepare and support His followers as they step out in obedience.

Please join us in praying for this year's mission participants - for the message of Jesus to shine brightly, and for the 10,000+ seeds of faith sown to yield fruit. Pray for God's blessing as we seek to break hard ground by living out the Gospel and showing the love of Jesus. And as you do this, I encourage you to ask God where he might be leading you to 'go' in 2024.

Yours in Christ,



**Ian Altman**  
State Director





Image left: SU NSW Kempsey Bible Club Mission 2023.  
 Images above: SU NSW Lake Tabourie Beach Mission 1959.

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## Robyn Gillespie's retirement announcement

Robyn Gillespie concluded her tenure on the SUNSW Board and as Board Chair at the October AGM. Robyn has served on the Board for the last nine years and has significantly contributed to the work of Scripture Union in NSW and provided leadership of the highest quality. She has seen Scripture Union NSW through some tough times and leaves the movement in a place where it can strategically plan for the future and is poised to enter a new season of growth across NSW.

We cannot thank Robyn enough for her support and leadership of our Movement; Robyn leaves a legacy that will be built on for years to come.



# One week, big boost.

We interviewed Martin Kennedy – Youth Pastor at Campbelltown City Baptist Church – about the new Inland Mission impacting the community of Narromine.



## *How did you get involved with Scripture Union beach mission?*

It's been 36 years of serving on SU Missions! In 1986 I gave my life to Christ, and then in 1987 I finished school and attended my first beach mission. Being involved in mission work was probably the most transformative experience I've had as a Christian.

Soon after, I was invited to lead the team which was a huge personal transition in my faith. As life went on, it became more and more clear to me that mission is not just another thing you do, but it's essential to your growth as a Christian.

In my role as a pastor, it's also been a privilege to say that serving on missions is a key pathway where we see kids grow from our church.



**The Narromine council was extremely receptive and amazed that a team would come and serve their small town.”**

## *How did you end up in Narromine?*

It's not your usual beach mission! There was a year where logistically things got a little messy – there was a mistake in the booking that prevented us from going to Bulli, like we'd historically done. But God opened up the opportunity for an inland mission, and it turned out to be one the best

experiences with the community that we've had. The whole neighbourhood was grateful for our presence!

Over the last few years, some SUFM's have expressed push back from council and caravan parks, and are not as open to us being amongst their communities. But

the Narromine council was extremely receptive and amazed that a team would come and serve their small town. They went out of their way to support us, advertise what we do, and help us find the best venues for our activities.

We've now pivoted to going to both Bulli and Narromine every year. We've built some phenomenal connections and are looking forward to continuing to foster connections in the community.

*How has this Inland Mission impacted the local churches in Narromine?*

One of our objectives going into Narromine is to connect with, and support the local churches. I think we've been able to help the churches see the opportunities and impact of doing very simple things, like dinner in the park and playing some games to help build connections with the local community. As a result, churches in the area are now coming together to do this at other times in the year, and it's a wonderful thing to see! Sometimes when you've been in a place for a long time you just need something to reignite the imagination for reaching your community.

*Are there any moments of transformation or impact that stand out to you?*

There are honestly too many to recount! Over the span of 30 years we've seen it all - from bushfires to being flooded out, to someone on the team giving birth at the site! However, what strikes me most is that some of the most meaningful conversations have occurred during what may seem like ordinary moments.

One particular memory stands out: a conversation with a security guard at the fringe of our tent one night. He approached me and asked, 'Can I talk to you about what the guys said on stage?' And before you know it we were having deep and significant discussions each day.

People don't just hear a message from us. They get to see us live out this message. It's word and deed together, and I think that's a very special witness.



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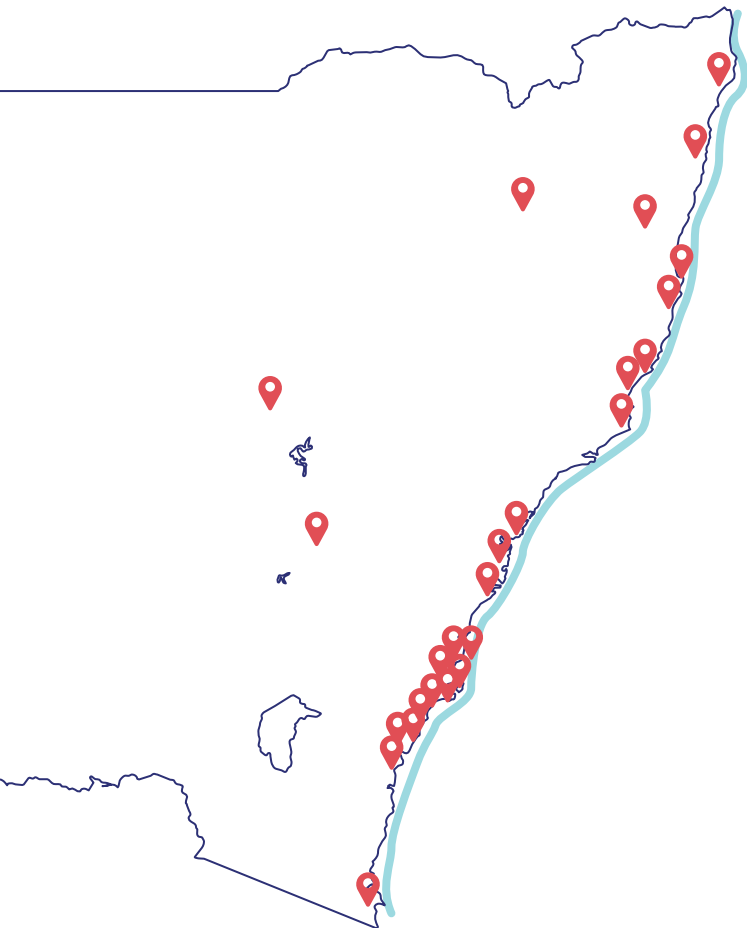


**WATCH THE FULL VIDEO INTERVIEW WITH MARTIN KENNEDY**





# Sharing Jesus with young people across NSW.



This summer, Christians from all walks of life are preparing to take the Good News of Jesus to beaches and holiday destinations across the NSW Coast. We ask God to protect, uphold and grow our volunteers, and that local communities will be blessed through their presence.

**+** 19

Scripture Union Family Missions (SUFM): Beach missions

**🏠** 2

Regional Partnership Missions (RPM): Inland ministry

**☀️** 3

Summer Life: Young people focused

**👥** 1,140+

Mission Volunteers

**⬆️** 6

Other community mission events

## SU's Got You Covered!

### Did you know that SU NSW has an Emergency Response Team?

Our Emergency Response Team (ERT) operates around the clock, serving as a crucial resource for Directors seeking policy clarity and collective decision-making throughout the Mission season. The team is made up of experienced SU volunteers, including police officers, doctors, child protection experts, lawyers, and fire specialists.



**Dr Chris Trethewy**  
SU Emergency Response Physician

“My role in SU NSW’s ERT extends my professional expertise to handle emergency situations, statewide crises, and complex child welfare issues. During the 2019–2020 South Coast bushfire crisis, I provided crucial support, coordinating teams and talking through the preparation and planning for evacuation. It was a pretty challenging time for the teams on the ground, but having regular contact – often via SMS or rostered phone calls – provided essential communication to the teams at the time of a state-wide disaster response.”



## We need your prayer!

To receive daily prayer points during missions and updates on online prayer meetings over this period, contact Rob Burton on 0478 775 744 or Dave Tankard on 0401 571 978. We thank you for your partnership in this vital mission.

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**The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”**

– JAMES 5:16 NIV



# Igniting Gospel Ministry in Rural NSW

In the heart of rural NSW, where communities are tight-knit and resources often scarce, an inspiring opportunity arose for SU NSW to partner with the churches of Blayney and Millthorpe.



The Blayney Holiday Kids Club, catering to primary-aged kids from kindergarten to year six, was held at Blayney Public School. There was an impressive turnout of 50 to 60 kids. Many came from unchurched backgrounds and delighted in singing, plays, puppet shows, games and outdoor sports.

Former SUNSW Missions Committee Chair, Nathan Milham, suggested the initiative to Rev Wally Cox, who had been a student with him at Moore College and was now Rector of the Blayney Anglican Parish. With the support of Norwest Anglican Church and SU NSW, a partnership was born, with the aim of helping churches in Blayney and Millthorpe to make meaningful and lasting connections with children, young people and families in their community.



**We were doing something that hadn't been done in this town for a very long time. We were doing it with one mind, unified under the Gospel. It felt significant, like we were breaking hard ground."**

Pete Stedman, Senior Minister at Norwest Anglican Church, posed a fundamental question to the Bishop of the Bathurst Diocese: "How can we support you?" This simple query paved the way for an incredible partnership. Bec Choi, Assistant Minister at Millthorpe Anglican recalls:

"We shared our idea of a holiday kids club - something we couldn't pull off on our own. Norwest Anglican readily embraced the project and agreed to come alongside to help bring it to life."

The partnership was not only fruitful for Blayney, but for those who served. Pete

Stedman reflects: "I saw kids step up to lead and serve in ways they've never done before. Parents sharing Christ alongside their children. Different ethnicities and different stages of life coming



together as one – to be united in the single cause of bringing the life and light of Christ to people who were walking in the darkness. It was an absolute privilege to be a part of.”

Norwest Anglican's diverse team of around 30 individuals represented a significant commitment of time and effort. Most of the kids heard the name of Jesus for the first time. One of the volunteers recalled a boy at pickup telling his grandma, “I learned that Jesus loves me, and He loves you too!”

SU NSW brought extensive experience and infrastructure, taking care of safe ministry practices and registration, which added a crucial layer to the partnership. As Bec explained, “Having Scripture Union handle the administrative side of things lifted a tremendous burden. They’ve had over 100 years of experience and wisdom to impart.”

The Holiday Kids Club was positive for the whole community. Many locals were blown away by the generosity of the team who had come to love and serve their kids. Bec recalls, “We were doing something that hadn’t been done in this town for a very long time. We were doing it with one mind, unified under the Gospel. It felt significant. Like we were breaking hard ground.”

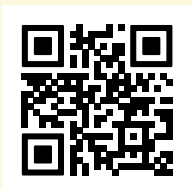
Norwest Anglican brought along their industrial coffee machine, providing free coffees for parents at drop-off. This was a lovely opportunity for people from the church to engage with parents in conversation and form relationships. According to Bec, “It was beyond the imagination of our older congregation, that so many people would come at such personal cost and care about our town, our ministry, our kids, and just bless us in this generous way.”

With parents expressing their desire for a repeat Mission, Norwest Anglican's commitment to a three-year partnership, and support from SU NSW – this ministry will continue to grow stronger.



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**The uniqueness of Rural Missions is that the program is shaped by the churches of the local towns, who know their community and its needs.”**  
– ANDREW PARKINSON

**HELP SU NSW'S  
MISSIONS BREAK  
HARD GROUND FOR  
THE GOSPEL.**



**One week. Big boost.**

**WOULD YOUR CHURCH BE INTERESTED IN  
RURAL PARTNERSHIP MISSIONS (RPMS)?**



Contact Andrew Parkinson, Associate Director of Training & Equipping:  
[andrew.parkinson@sunsw.org.au](mailto:andrew.parkinson@sunsw.org.au)



# Spring Camp Highlights

 12

Spring camps held

 50

Camp Volunteers

 100+

Young people reached



## Soccer Camp

“Our first Soccer Camp was a remarkable success with 33 leaders and 43 campers. The site was fantastic, right across from a soccer field. Many professionals were involved, providing excellent coaching. A local intern pastor shared the Gospel, highlighting Jesus as the “Good Coach,” and many young people took a step of faith.

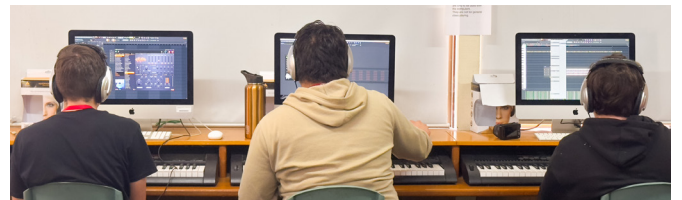
The unity and teamwork among the team leaders, who had never met before, was awe-inspiring.”

– Jasmine Ruigrok, Camp Leader



## Reboot Camp

A unique four-day residential experience, where campers explore their tech interests alongside the relevance of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. Electives included programming, ‘Blender’, 3D modelling, and blogging. One parent shared, “Reboot is a place where my son thrives. He’s doing what he loves while being embraced and accepted by the supportive and caring community. This means so much to me.”



## Create and Connect Camp

“We are so happy for the success of this camp and the many lives it has deeply touched! So proud of the team, and thankful for all the girls who came along! There was some great feedback from parents and attendees - everyone involved looks forward to more craft camps in the future.”

– Latisha Buttsworth, Camp volunteer



# Sharing the Good News at NSW State Schools

## SRE and ISCF Flourishing at Chatswood High

Mark Baines, the Reach Churches scripture teacher at Chatswood High School, brings an encouraging update. Special Religious Education (SRE) at the school is thriving, with engaged students asking questions and exploring God’s word. An encouraging development is the resurgence of the ISCF (Inter-School Christian Fellowship), providing a lunchtime haven for Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and faith-sharing.

The ISCF has grown from 8 students at the beginning of the year to over 30, with students testifying about Jesus to their peers. Mark emphasises the vital partnership between SRE and local churches and his efforts to connect with parents and pastors, fostering a sense of community and shared mission.



### Prayer points for Chatswood High School

- Pray for God’s blessing on the upcoming Prayer Breakfast, for unity within the Christian community.
- Pray for a powerful Christmas assembly that testifies to the Gospel’s goodness.
- Give thanks for students sharing their faith; pray for their continued courage and influence on others.

## Thank you for supporting the Hope Project 2023

As the HSC Exams have come to a close, we appreciate your partnership with us in supporting Year 12 students in NSW. The celebration packs are on the way, recognising the student’s achievements and reminding them of God’s love.



**WATCH MARK BAINE’S VIDEO UPDATE ON CHATSWOOD SCHOOL MINISTRY**





## Celebrating a successful Taste & See Conference

Over 100 people attended from all over Sydney, both existing volunteers and those wanting to find out more about the SU movement. It was a great day of encouraging each other in Christ, learning new insights from our speakers, and reflecting on how we can make a Kingdom impact.

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Special thanks to our valuable contributors, notably renowned author and Christian sexologist **Patricia Weerakoon** for her insights on Gender Identity, and to **Colin Buchanan**, whose performance had us in stitches!

