



# SU News

SPRING EDITION 2024



## Sowing seeds

**CAMPS EDITION**

07 Working with churches

04 Jesus and footy

10 Serving behind the scenes

“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

- Romans 10:13



# Welcome from the Board Chair

I had the joy of being a 'camp kid' when I was nine-years-old, and my Dad was directing a Scripture Union Leadership Conference in the Blue Mountains. I remember that the cool teenagers with their permed hair, shoulder-padded tops, earrings, jeans, Reebok sneakers, and guitars were also kind and loved Jesus. They took time to get to know me and included me in their games.

It was so reassuring that Christians could be fun as well as serious about their faith. Making the decision to keep trusting in Jesus as a teenager wouldn't mean I had to wear daggy clothes or be really boring or never have fun. I also heard clear Bible talks about how much God loved us in letting his son Jesus die in our place, with illustrations that were relevant to me as a primary school kid.

Although some things have changed since the late 1980s, a Scripture Union camp is still the place where young people can experience the love of God – through Scripture talks and Bible discussion groups, as well as loving Christian community.

As I have been reading Romans recently, I've been reminded of the beautiful partnership of SU NSW with volunteers from local churches as we seek to share the good news of Jesus with children, young people and families AND to encourage people of all ages to meet God daily through Bible and prayer.

*"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!' – Romans 10:13-15*

This Spring, and in the year ahead, there will be Scripture Union camps all over NSW, where kids and teenagers will get the chance to hear the good news that "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved," and experience God's love in action through fun and adventures in a Christian community.

For some, this might be the first time they clearly understand the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ, and what it means to live under his Lordship. They will be cared for by our dedicated SU NSW volunteer leaders who will preach this gospel message through their words and actions. Whether or not they wear Reeboks on their feet like the cool leaders of the 1980s, the Bible reminds us "how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"



What a privilege and joy for SU NSW to be a part of God's saving work! There is every chance that, under God, in 10, 20 or 30 years time – the children and young people attending the camps mentioned in these pages will return to a SU camp as a leader, Director or even Board Chair.

Wouldn't that be a great thing to pray for? Let us keep praying that God would continue to be powerfully at work in and through SU NSW camps for his glory alone.

In Christ,



Liz Moll  
Scripture Union NSW Board Chair



# Jesus and footy

Jesus and footy come together at SU NSW Rugby League Camp. SU News interviewed Director Janelle Tongue and her son, Co-Director Alan Tongue, about sowing gospel seeds and footy drills.

Janelle Tongue grew up in a non-Christian family. When she was in high school she attended an ISCF camp, where she put her faith in the Lord Jesus. Having had this experience, Janelle says, "I could see the value of getting kids away from home, being surrounded by people who love the Lord Jesus. It's such a natural environment for them to understand what it is to be a Christian and be immersed in God's love."

Janelle would go on to start two SU camps, first SU NSW Rugby League

Camp – an idea that God put on her heart several years ago, and then SU NSW Pins and Needles Camp, as well as co-directing Bake Off Camp.

## Getting the camp off the ground

When people like Janelle have an idea for a new SU NSW camp (and we love to encourage new ideas), some important things had to come together in God's good timing to get it off the ground. Janelle's son Alan, a gifted leader



and committed Christian, was a key part of her idea, and he was playing rugby league for the Canberra Raiders at the time. Janelle prayed and waited. When Alan retired in 2011, she waited a bit longer to give him some time to adjust. Janelle says, "God's timing is always perfect. When I put the idea to him, he said, 'Mum, of course we can do that.'"

Pictured Left: Rugby League camp leaders and attendees 2024.  
Below: Drills and training.



**“Now in its eighth year, the camp is growing. The first year, 22 boys attended, and then each year it has gathered momentum. In 2024, 70 boys registered!”**

As Director, Janelle’s role involves overseeing the administration, including liaising with Farrer Agricultural High School (where the camp is held), camper registrations, leader and junior leader registrations, referee checks, and training, working closely with SU NSW. When camp starts, Janelle ‘hands over’ to someone with a louder voice - Jimmy Alley - to help co-direct. “When he speaks, the boys stop and listen. I support him, looking out for the boys and making sure we run to time.”

### Footy drills and gospel seeds

Alan focuses on the footy side of things. “There’s a fair cohort who are coming for the rugby league content and many who come for the Christian message. So my role is to try and bring together the best of both those worlds in the program.”

Alan tries to incorporate the gospel message into footy drills, including the NRL ‘TackleReady’ program

(because after the first year they had a lot of feedback about doing more tackling.) “The three key themes this year were getting to know Jesus, growing in Jesus, then showing Jesus. I tried to drive that through the drills and activities we did.”

**“I really believe the power of sport as a universal language. I think if Jesus was walking on the Earth today he’d tell parables with links so heavily to sport.”**

From Alan’s perspective, this experience-based learning, where the kids get to apply what they’re learning about Jesus to how they play footy, straight away, helps to impart the message. Alan explains, “It’s not about reaping the harvest in three days. It’s about sowing seeds.”

Alan and Janelle tell the story of Davy\*, a boy who came to camp last year for the first time. He caused a lot of trouble, acted like the ‘class clown’ and was hard work for the leaders. When his Mum registered him again this year, the leaders were a bit worried.

\* Name changed for privacy purposes.  
Article continues on the following page.



## A typical day at Rugby League camp

**6 am:** Wake-up

**6:30 am:** Fitness and drills, leader testimony during cool-down

**7:30 am:** Breakfast

**8:30 am:** Mates time (short individual Bible study with our ‘greatest mate God’)

**9:00 am:** Footy drills

**10:15 am:** Morning tea

**10:30 am:** Gather in the clubhouse to hear from guest speaker and learn camp memory verse

**11:45 am:** Kick a ball around

**12:30 pm:** Lunch

**1:00 pm:** Small group Bible discussion with leaders

**2:00 pm:**  
Tuesday - Basketball/  
Gymnastics/Farmers challenge  
Wednesday - Footy golf

**3:30 pm:** Afternoon tea

**4:30 pm:** Drills

**5:30 pm:** Dinner (including testimony)

**6:15 pm:** Game under lights

**8:30 pm:** ‘On the couch’ - short interactive video interview with a current Christian footy player OR watch a televised footy game

**9:15 pm:** Showers and bedtime  
Extra volunteers come in for support, to allow leaders to debrief together



To their amazement, “Davy was absolutely brilliant this year,” says Alan. “Nothing had changed on the home front. Nothing had changed at school. But I think he started to understand that camp was a safe place, and that he didn’t have to muck up. He got involved, and even opened the Bible and read a passage in front of 70 other boys. That tells me that God’s working in miraculous ways. I hope that continues for Davy, and he takes that message back to his Mum.”

### Finishing well and following up

Finishing a camp well is important. On the last day, there’s a showcase for the parents - including demonstrating the skills they’ve learned and singing a footy song about ‘the Jesus team.’ They also pray for each small group of campers as they go back to their families, footy teams and schools.

Following up with kids after camp can be hard, but knowing the importance of those ongoing connections, where possible, Janelle tries to connect with campers’ local churches or school chaplains. She says,

*“I’ve had feedback from one chaplain that a camper said, ‘Camp was the best time of my life and I didn’t want to leave!’”*

There are also some personal communications long after camp is over. Janelle sends each camper a birthday card on behalf of the directors, with a Bible verse. And about four months after camp, all the kids receive a certificate in the mail, often acknowledging something funny or special from camp, along with a photo - a reminder of the things they learned.

### Pray

As Rugby League camp continues to grow, Janelle asks the SU NSW community to pray.

*“Please pray for God’s provision for camp speakers, more leaders, and training and nurturing for the junior leaders.”*

### As seen on TV!

This year, our Rugby League Camp got some attention from the regional TV stations. Scan the QR code to watch their coverage.



## Have you got an idea for an SU NSW Camp?

Janelle Tongue says, “I had a connection to football, but everyone has a connection to something. I have grandchildren asking, ‘why can’t we have a hockey camp or netball camp?’ I’m praying, Lord, please raise somebody to do it!”

Janelle has some words of wisdom:

- Pray.
- Observe another camp in action.
- Talk to current camp directors.
- Don’t think you’ve got to have all the skills yourself, you’ll work as a team.
- Even if you have a small or crazy idea, start a conversation with SU! From small things, big things grow!

Contact us to discuss the next steps in starting a camp.  
Email: [info@sunsw.org.au](mailto:info@sunsw.org.au)



*Pictured: Alan Tongue running activities at Rugby League Camp.*

# Working with Churches

At SU NSW we love the local church. SU News chatted with SU NSW Western District Regional Worker, Kylie Letcher to learn how churches can be part of what God is doing through camps.

Kylie Letcher's role with SU NSW focuses on overseeing about 10 to 12 camps in the Western Region of NSW every year.

"My role looks different from camp to camp. One director may need help with finding a location, or a speaker or leaders, while another director may want help with various SU NSW requirements. If they have been directing for ages, I might pray with, and encourage them in the lead-up. When camps are happening, I visit for a day or two at each camp, getting to know the leaders, meeting kids and promoting Scripture Union."

Kylie explains that SU NSW would love to grow deeper partnerships with churches, and here she shares some important ways that churches of all sizes can get involved with SU NSW camps:

## How churches can support SU NSW camps

### Praying for volunteers

Churches can invest in people from their congregations who are going to lead on, or direct a camp by praying for them in a service, before they go, and also requesting prayer points to pray while the camp is on.

### Promoting SU NSW Camps

Churches can encourage their young people to go on SU NSW Camps. Kylie says,

*"There is a camp for nearly everyone. We'd love to see more churches sharing these opportunities with their youth groups and congregations."*

"Kids can hear about Jesus while also engaging with something they enjoy, whether it's sewing or football or horse riding."

### Following up with campers

Follow up is vital. SU NSW seeks to work alongside local churches to welcome and disciple young people as they come back from a camp, wherever possible. In practice this looks like leaders/directors letting a camper know about churches in their local area and then perhaps contacting the church to start a natural connection.



Pictured: Kylie Letcher at SU NSW Leadership Conference.

### Generous giving of resources

There are other possibilities for churches to get involved in SU camps, such as financial giving, providing catering for camp meals, or making church buildings available for camps/conferences.



### Get involved

*"We're encouraged to see churches like Molong Baptist Church partnering with SU NSW as one of their mission organisations."*

– Kylie Letcher

Discover more about how your church can support SU NSW Camps.  
Contact: Dave Tankard  
[dave.tankard@sunsw.org.au](mailto:dave.tankard@sunsw.org.au)

# God at *work* through SU NSW camps



God is at work through SU Camps all over NSW – from the preparation, to the precious young people who attend, the relationships formed on camp and the gospel seeds sown. We hope you enjoy these snapshots from some of our current camps!



## Glenbawn Fishing Camp

26 campers and 16 leaders gathered on the shores of Glenbawn Dam to explore the tale of Jonah through Bible talks from Tom Magill. Many fish were caught, and campers were challenged to know the love of God for everyone – even the people we don't like!

One camper shared, "I get made fun of for going on Christian camps, but it's the only place I get to see real Christians and I can ask questions." Another said,

*"I have learned that God is always waiting for us to come home."*

## Rugby Union Camp

At Rugby Union Camp, new and experienced Rugby players develop their skills under experienced First Grade and Representative players and coaches of the 'Game they play in Heaven' and learn what the Bible says about 'getting the call up to God's Team.'

Christian 'Chippy' Petersen, Camp Director says, "I've seen first-hand how the testimony of a massive Tongan prop can impact a tiny, young, female winger's skills on the field, her confidence on and off the field and most importantly, relationship with Jesus.

We opened up the camp to girls because (statistically speaking), any female student who takes a Rugby pathway has a very high chance of playing professionally. We hope that exposing them to high quality coaching (which is difficult for regional girls to get) will help them to be shining lights for the gospel along that road."

Please pray for growth: in the number of non-church kids attending to hear the gospel, in maturity for those who know Jesus as Lord and in the skills of the leaders, as we seek to equip them.







## Football Camp

Our four day intensive Football masterclass with former Socceroos player, Gerry Gomez, includes skill sessions, drills and games, and is integrated with Bible-based teaching aimed to equip and inspire campers to live out a Christian faith in a modern day world.

Jasmine Ruigrok, Camp Leader says, "Two of the campers who attended last year became close friends, bonding over a love of soccer, started going to youth group, and now they want to be baptised."

**"Fun sport + loving community + sharing the Gospel = lives changed!"**

Pray for the continued development of the team, for new leaders, for God to guide the planning, and for His Name to be made great through all of camp!

## Fishing & Diving Camp

Teenage boys spend a week in God's creation on the Sapphire Coast fishing in and out of the river, and eating great food while learning about Jesus from the Bible and through the lives of the leaders.

**"I have lost count of the amount of past campers and parents who have expressed what a significant impact Fishing and Diving Camp has had on theirs, or their child's walk with Jesus. I am one of those parents now!"** – Rod Wallace, Director

Pray for campers to grow in their knowledge of Jesus. Give thanks to God for our great leadership team, the wonderful site, and pray we can continue to use it. Please also pray for a Team Leader and team for a girls Fishing and Diving Camp.



**"On our SU NSW Camps Day, our Directors reflected that gathering together helped them connect with the wider camps family, and Leaders appreciated learning how other camps approach their ministry."**

– Dave Tankard  
SU NSW Associate Director, Camps & Missions



# Serving behind the scenes

The SU NSW Camps Reference Group (CRG) is a vital behind the scenes ministry that supports our camps. It's just one of the many ways people can use their gifts and skills to serve with SU NSW.

## The role of the CRG

The CRG is a Ministry Committee established under the Standing Orders for the Board of SU NSW. They hold regular monthly online meetings.

The CRG read the Bible, pray specifically for SU NSW Camps and the wider organisation, plan for the training of our volunteers, including Camps Day, ensure compliance of activities with the SU NSW Strategic Plan, and oversee the appointment of Camp Directors or leadership teams for specific activities.

If you are interested in joining the CRG, you can contact us on 02 9638 9000 to find out more.



## Jenny Speer

"I attended the SU NSW Leadership Conference as a camper in about 1985. I began volunteering at the Leadership Conference in Tamworth in 2018, and I am now a Camp Director.

What I love about being a part of the CRG is helping to keep SU camps going, and helping new camps start, so that young people can have a great time, as well as meet Jesus and grow in their faith."



## Gin Oakley

"I joined the CRG in 2015, to learn what training might be useful for new directors like myself. At the time, there were a number of long-time directors already on the committee - we're always looking for a spread of expertise. I took over as CRG Chair in 2021, with the aim of continuing to grow camps and leadership training opportunities for SU NSW.

It's a blessing to get alongside young people as they make decisions about the direction of their life and their eternal residence. Through the CRG, I've heard about needs in camps beyond my own camp area. This year I stepped across to be the speaker at Zookeepers Camp."

*"The CRG has helped me feel part of the whole Camps Family and the wider SU NSW movement."*

# From camper to director

Dan Harte, one of SU NSW's volunteers, shares about his journey from camper, to a leader and now the Camp Director of Shearing Camp.

Our vision for Shearing Camp is to show these young boys about life on the land; that all these blokes out here follow God. You can still be 'manly' and follow Jesus.

*"I first attended shearing camp when I was in Year 9, and I've been there almost every year since."*

I came back as a leader because I was keen to teach the campers about farming and what it means to be a godly Christian. I was asked to become a director about three or four years after starting to lead, and I've now been directing for 11 years.

At our camp in July, we had a boy come up from Victoria for his fourth Shearing Camp. It is incredible to see how he is still following God and growing year after year.

Please thank God for everyone on this year's camp, and pray that the seeds that were planted would keep growing.

**Read the full interview with Dan about Shearing Camp on our website.**



*Pictured: Shearing Camp.*



## Volunteer with SU NSW

Help make a difference in the lives of young people. You can become a leader for a camp, mission or school ministry, or there are many other ways to serve God with SU NSW.

Whatever your gifts and skills, we would love to support you as you use those gifts to bring God's Good News to children, young people and families.

Find out more about our volunteering opportunities.



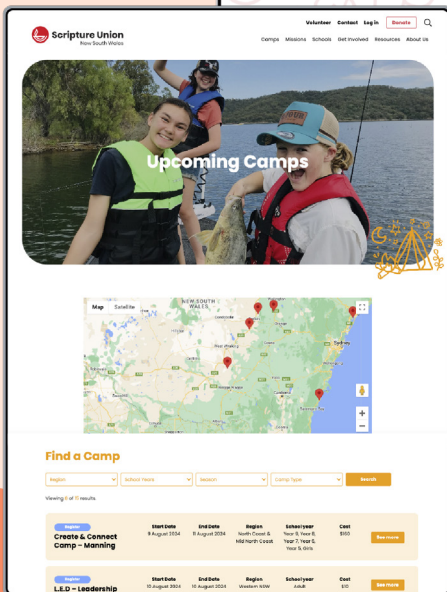
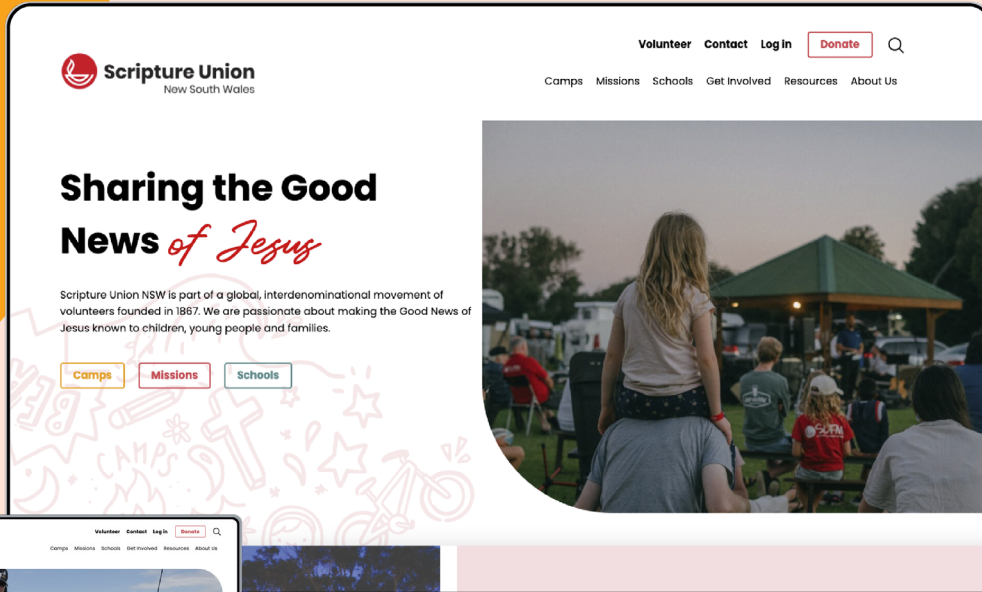
## You can help get kids to camp

The SU NSW Benevolent Fund provides funds for young people to go to camps that they otherwise could not afford. Your gift will give a young person a unique opportunity to hear about Jesus on an SU NSW Camp.

To make a tax deductible donation to our benevolent fund, call 02 9638 9000.

# Check out our new website!

[sunsu.org.au](http://sunsu.org.au)



See upcoming camps, missions and volunteer opportunities!

Download resources and partner with us.

