
RUN LEARNING AND TEACHING AWARDS 2024

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Title: Student Initiative in Lifestyle Education

Abstract: SMILE is a service-learning approach to education that aims to motivate students to think creatively, respond to real-world problems, and promote social justice by working in partnership with community groups and not-for-profit organizations. It is a 3-week Work Integrated Learning initiative recently facilitated at 2 community organisations: Logan East Community Neighborhood Association (LECNA) and the Northern Rivers Community Gateway (NRCG).

Students manage and deliver four key activities in the SMILE program including the Student-Led Health Kiosk, the Have a Chat drop-in Centre, Health education sessions, and StARTalking: Arts and Health workshops. These activities connect academic learning to public service, creating strong ties between the university and the community. The SMILE focus is to respond to community need, celebrate regional identity, and support disadvantaged and vulnerable people in the Lismore and Logan area, with plans to expand the footprint to include the Mid North Coast in February 2025.

Through SMILE, Southern Cross University is not only addressing immediate needs, but also contributing to the long-term resilience and development of communities.