

SUBJECT: LMM 25/07/17 - UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE FOR EQUITY IN HIGHER EDUCATIONS, CHILDREN'S UNIVERSITY PROGRAM

MOTION

That:

1. Council develops a collaborative partnership between the Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education (CEEHE) and the City of Newcastle, to further the growth of the Children's University program throughout the Newcastle Region;
2. Council explores the opportunity for Newcastle to become a Children's University City and to build upon the existing local businesses and community groups engaged with the Children's University program in Newcastle; and
3. Council works with the CEEHE to select learning destinations throughout the Newcastle Local Government Area for accreditation as a Children's University Learning Destination and/or activity.

Background

Children's University Newcastle encourages children between the ages of seven and 14 to be curious learners by participating in validated activities beyond the school curriculum.

The program is designed to engage children in learning in its broadest sense and to provide the scaffolding for children to develop self-efficacy, confidence and an appreciation of learning outside of the school classroom.

Each participant receives a passport where their hours of learning are recorded and stamped by registered organisations, referred to as learning destinations.

Students are supported to access a variety of extra learning opportunities at local learning destinations across the Hunter, Newcastle and Central Coast regions.

Learning activities are highly regulated and can be developed by schools (staff and family members) or by learning destinations such as museums, art galleries, wetlands and the university. All activities and destinations are subject to assessment and accreditation and only certified Children's University Learning Destinations and activities can participate. The Children's University provides an opportunity for children, young people and their families to actively engage in their learning and wider community.

Once 30 hours of learning are reached, students are invited to attend a graduation ceremony to celebrate their achievements.

The program was launched in 2016, involving 300 students across nine schools who took part in activities offered by 58 learning destinations. Launch Schools were Callaghan Wallsend Campus; Glendore Public School, Plattsburg Public School; Wallsend Public School; Waratah West Public School; Jesmond Public School; Beresfield Public School; Hamilton Public School and Newcastle High School.

In 2017, the program has almost tripled in size, supporting 1000 students from 24 schools to access a range of learning activities offered in their communities.

This year we are also proudly working with the following local organisations to offer the program to young students currently in care (foster or residential):

- Allambi Care
- Premier Youthworks
- Settlement Services International
- Wandiyali
- Wesley Mission

The University of Newcastle (UON) is one of only a handful of universities offering this program in Australia.

Unique to the University of Newcastle's Children's University is the partnering with the NSW Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) and the wider Out of Home Care (OOHC) community to pilot Children's University with children and young people in OOHC within the Newcastle region.

Children and young people, their carers and families and caseworkers are being made aware of the importance of education, in particular opportunities outside of the classroom and school structure, creating a greater range of learning opportunities for their child.

The pilot program was scheduled to engage up to 30 children in the OOHC within the Newcastle Region, however demand has been overwhelming with over 80 children from OOHC now involved.

Children's University Newcastle is being supported by UON's Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education and is a member of Children's University Australia.

Source: <https://www.newcastle.edu.au/community-and-alumni/community-engagement/community-and-school-programs/aim-high/childrens-university-newcastle>