

MEDIA RELEASE



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UNDER STRICT EMBARGO UNTIL 11 AM ON THURSDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2024

Snow Foundation and UC partner to expand pathways to higher education

Snow Foundation and the University of Canberra (UC) today announced a partnership committing to the delivery of 160 Snow Scholarships valued at \$20 million over 10 years.

Scholars will each receive support of up to \$30,000 per year for the duration of their degree, as well as holistic wrap-around support. This will be one of the most generous and supportive undergraduate scholarship programs per student in Australia.

Snow Scholarships will create opportunities for students with passion and potential who may be facing barriers to higher education and who live in Canberra and regional or rural NSW. The transformative program will empower students to become future leaders, changemakers and innovators, creating impact and influencing meaningful change through access to higher education.

Scholars will benefit from an inclusive cohort, reflecting a diversity of backgrounds, experiences, genders, identities, ages, and academics, allowing them to thrive in a supportive and stimulating environment where they can learn from each other.

Two categories of scholarships will be awarded: Equity and Indigenous Scholarships. Up to 16 Scholars per year will be selected on their leadership potential, commitment to social purpose and academic achievements.

This program will enrich Canberra and the broader community by fostering a new generation of skilled leaders, strengthening the local workforce and contributing to the growth of businesses and community initiatives throughout the region.

“Snow Foundation has a deep connection to Canberra and this partnership with the University of Canberra reflects our commitment to the future of this great city where our family has lived and worked,” Snow Foundation CEO Georgina Byron AM said.

“We believe in the power of education as a driver of change and the Snow Scholarships builds on our existing scholarship program already benefitting 76 students each year, through several partnerships. Our vision is to attract students with smart minds and big

hearts and to enable them to reach their potential and make meaningful contributions to their communities and beyond. The ripple effect of Snow Scholarships will be profound, aiming to nurture the next generation of globally aware and socially conscious leaders across sectors – whether in community, business, science, law, health or politics.”

Ms Lisa Paul AO PSM, Chancellor of the University of Canberra said the partnership was a natural fit.

“The University of Canberra is dedicated to opportunity. We are recognised globally for reducing inequalities and 40 percent of our students are the first in their family to go to university. Through this collaboration with Snow Foundation, we look forward to building on our shared values of equity and inclusivity and enhancing access to higher education for underrepresented students in the ACT and regional NSW,” Ms Paul said.

“We are incredibly grateful to Snow Foundation for supporting future students in this way.”

These comprehensive Scholarships intend to alleviate the financial barriers that may prevent students from accessing higher education and enable them to focus on their educational outcomes and leadership aspirations.

The Snow Scholarships will cover on-campus accommodation, financial support for living expenses and the cost of travelling home, holistic leadership development, First Nations experience and education, access to tutoring, academic and placement support. Plus, access to free medical, wellbeing and financial services. A dedicated scholar space – Snow Scholar House – will provide a unique study space where the students can connect and learn together.

Professor Stephen Parker AO, Vice-Chancellor at the University of Canberra welcomed the partnership.

“It is a great privilege to partner with the Snow Foundation to create opportunities for disadvantaged students in Canberra and the region. The effects of this generosity will be felt for generations to come, and we are extremely grateful,” Professor Parker said.

University of Canberra’s Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership, Professor Maree Meredith, said the Scholarships will be a gamechanger.

“This is a visionary program in the Australian higher education landscape. People talk about life changing opportunities a bit too often, but this really is one of those opportunities because the scholarships are matched to support the Scholars as needed across their student journey,” Professor Meredith said.

“I believe these Scholars are going to become a formidable force for positive change in the future. It’s about inclusion and it doesn’t matter whether you are Indigenous, whether you are growing up in a household with low income, or hundreds of kilometres away in the bush – this program gives you the opportunity to become part of an extraordinary community.”

Applications for the Snow Scholarships will open in early 2025, with successful applicants commencing their studies in Semester One 2026. Further information on the Program is available on the [University of Canberra website](#).

UC alumni have expressed support for the Program:

Mr Nick Villiers, UC alumnus

Coming from a low socioeconomic background, Mr Nick Villiers a UC alumnus had to navigate being homeless while doing his HSC and a traumatic brain injury in his first semester of uni.

“Getting to university shouldn’t be the finish line, it should be the starting line, and we need to support people throughout their entire Uni journey,” he said.

“Coming to the university initially was quite daunting, though it was something I had been dreaming of for years ... [when I graduated] I remember the feeling of just realising that I was the first person to do that in my family – it was one of the proudest moments of my life.”

Mr Tim Rees, UC alumnus

“As someone with a disability there are many barriers to accessing higher education. For me, a Scholarship such as this would have alleviated many pressures for my family as it was always a balance of funding my accommodation, living and travel expenses,” Mr Rees said.

“My advice to anyone with aspirations to study is to not let your circumstances define you. Simply go for it and you'll achieve what you want to achieve, and it will be life changing.”

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