



Life-Long Learning

Oorala's 'TRACKS' tertiary preparation program at the University of New England has further enriched the life of mother and grandmother Susan Lewis (née Scrutton), empowering her with the skills and confidence to pursue higher education and storytelling later in life. Now residing on Anaiwan Country, Susan deeply respects the Elders of the land she calls home, especially acknowledging Uncle Collin Ahoy and the Oorala Aboriginal Centre at UNE.

“Their TRACKS programme gave me the tools to research and write academically and the confidence to pursue further studies,”

Susan was born in Darwin and spent her formative years at Rum Jungle, near her grandmother Nellie Flynn—a pioneering Aboriginal woman—and her Auntie Frances. “These strong matriarchs have been key influencers personally and

culturally,” Susan shared.

Other significant influences came from Aboriginal women from Larrakeyah and Daly River, and her work in the 1980s with Yolngu women under the Aboriginal Resource and Development Services (ARDS) team. “I learnt a lot about Yolngu culture and a little bit of Yolngu Matha (Yolngu language). The guidance from ARDS has helped me greatly in my various roles since then,” Susan explained.

Recent discoveries about her family history, including her connection to the Calma family and their shared Woolwonga heritage, inspired Susan to “get more serious about my own family and cultural history research.

When employment opportunities decreased, Susan took the bold step of enrolling in TRACKS at Oorala, marking a pivotal moment in her life. Susan had always enjoyed writing poetry and held an ambition to create children’s stories. Her studies at UNE expanded these aspirations, encouraging her to also explore meaningful narratives about



Susan Lewis (Née Scrutton)

her ancestors’ experiences during colonial times. “It was through Oorala and my studies that I realised it was okay to write about personal matters,” Susan said.

She continues to passionately pursue storytelling through truth-telling and cultural research.

Susan’s commitment and determination culminated in her graduation with an Advanced Diploma in Arts in 2024.

Reflecting proudly, she says, “I am a lifelong learner and proud to have reached this milestone.” Her inspiring journey demonstrates the endless possibilities education can open at any stage of life.



A pathway to university, tailored for you

At UNE we understand not everybody has the academic background to dive head-first into a uni course. So we’ve developed TRACKS, specifically to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people prepare for university study.

TRACKS Tertiary Preparation Program

The dedicated team at our Oorala Aboriginal Centre will work alongside you, stepping you through the program, helping you to gain the skills and confidence necessary to undertake a degree at UNE.

Your culture, your community and our partnership – helping you to future fit your life.

Apply now!

Benefits of TRACKS include:

- Can be studied completely online.
- Is flexible to suit your specific needs.
- Free access to peer mentors and tutorial support.
- You will be part of a community of like-minded students who share similar goals.
- The opportunity to study a unit in your area of interest that may count towards your UNE degree.



For more information visit une.edu.au/tracks-course or phone Oorala on 1800 622 384



Future fit
your life

