

CHARLIE SETS OUT TO CHANGE THE WORLD

EIGHT-year-old Fingal boy Charlie Cairncross this week became the youngest recipient of the Australian Wildlife Society Youth Conservation Award.

The Lindisfarne student received his honour at the News South Wales Parliament House this week in recognition of his efforts during the 2019-2020 summer bushfires as well for founding the Green Heroes Wildlife Adoption Program, which now has more than 170 classrooms across Australia engaged in native species conservation.

Australian Wildlife Society President Associate Professor Julie Old said Charlie was dedicated to preserving and protecting native Australian wildlife and was currently working on a second project and short film to be released in a few months.

"The youth of Australia make significant contributions to the wildlife conservation movement through innovative projects and ideas," she said.

"The Youth Conservation Award aims to inspire young people to have a stake in wildlife conservation by recognising and rewarding their efforts. Charlie's speech

was very inspiring – he had the whole room in tears. Given the opportunity to be part of the wildlife conservation movement, Charlie is a real example that the youth of Australia will rise to the occasion and protect Australia's native wildlife"

Charlie, who lives at Fingal with his parents and two brothers, made the trip to Sydney with his mother Sarah Jantos to receive the award with youngster saying it was not just for him but all children who care about conservation.

"Thank you to the Australian Wildlife Society for choosing me to receive this award and for honouring the power of the little people in Australian Conservation," he said.

"My mum and I have always rescued, rehabilitated and released native wildlife at our home in Northern NSW, but last summer as bushfires damaged the land, we volunteered to travel to the South Coast of NSW to help small wildlife shelters such as Majors Creek Wombat Refuge.

"I will never forget it. When we arrived, there were lots of little fires still burning all around us. The wildlife carers



Eight-year-old Fingal boy Charlie Cairncross with Australian Wildlife Society CEO Patrick Medway AM at Parliament House in Sydney this week.

we met had tears in their eyes, sadness in their voices and too many animals to look after. We helped as much as we could - but I knew more help was needed.

"With the help of my family and friends I made a short film to send to preschools across Australia asking children just like me to help by sponsoring a joey.

Over 4000 children in 170 preschools across Australia fundraised to sponsor an animal. Together we raised over \$13,000. That is a lot of money raised by three and four year olds!

"In some ways I am simply here today to receive this honour on behalf of those children. But as children we want to do more. We may

be small, but our hearts are big. We worry about what is happening to our World. We understand the difference between token gestures and a true call to action. The race to protect Australian native wildlife is REAL and when we are given a real opportunity to be part of this - children WILL rise to it.

This year, I will continue to promote the wildlife adoption program to help wildlife carers and native animals. I will also be working with Green Heroes to give children more opportunities to protect and preserve native animals - BEFORE they suffer, BEFORE they are injured and BEFORE it is too late.

"We may not be able to save the World Before Bedtime - but together, we CAN Change the World."

Back home at Fingal Charlie is continuing his work at Green Heroes as a Junior Wild Defender on wildlife conservation action projects aimed at children and youth.

Green Heroes hopes to support the growing movement of children and young people seeking to take action to preserve and protect native flora and fauna, for more information head to www.greenheroes.org.au.

ATAR talent kicks off at North Coast uni

WHEN Amy Mazzarella steps foot on the Southern Cross University campus for her first class in 2021 after finishing high school at Banora Point she'll be one of more than a thousand new students welcomed to the worldwide and nationally recognised facility.

Southern Cross University has seen dramatic demand in domestic applications, which have increased more than 16 percent, with the University welcoming students back on campus and online for Session 1 classes.

Amy (pictured) was recently awarded Southern Cross University's prestigious Vice Chancellor's Scholarship, following a metamorphic year where she overcame her fears to become the 2020 School Captain of St Joseph's Catholic at the Banora Point College and activated her personal study plan to become Dux of her school with a 96.15 ATAR.

The Bachelor of Law

student said her secret to achieving top grades and maximising opportunities was to be organised and have confidence.

"I used to be the girl who was really quiet and shy and who hated having to say a speech for an English assignment," Amy said.

"I don't even know why I was like that," the young change maker brimming with confidence said.

"I played representative netball so thought I'd go for sports captain because then I wouldn't have to make a speech. But later when I was talking to my mum about it I decided I had nothing to lose that I'd take the plunge," she said.

"Getting up in front of people was good for me, and I actually became school captain."

"I became so much more confident in Year 12, and sometimes it really pays off to put yourself out there."

During senior school



Amy took part in the BASE Leadership Programme for Grade 11 and 12 students from Tweed and Byron Shire which was sponsored by Southern Cross University, with access to specialised leadership workshops and scholarship opportunities.

"My first time on campus at Southern Cross University Gold Coast campus was in Year 11 for a workshop on effective decision-making

and I knew right away this is where I wanted to study law," 18 year old Amy said, who will be the first in her family to attend University.

"I live in Coolangatta and was born and raised here and I really wanted to stay local to continue to study and work in the area and live with my parents."

I drive past Southern Cross University all the time, and love that the campus is local, and you can get a world-class education close to the beach and yet it's personalised and small enough that you don't get lost."

"Southern Cross University has some incredible law graduates and this degree here is such an awesome opportunity to study and practice law locally. I'm most looking forward to meeting new people from across different degrees walks of life and I've secured part-time work in a local Coolangatta law firm called Keating Law which is already giving me

real world experience."

Senior manager of student management Paul Robinson said Southern Cross University experienced a massive 16 percent increase in domestic student applications across its campuses at Gold Coast, Lismore, Coffs Harbour and online compared to the same time last year.

"Our most in-demand courses include the ever-popular Bachelor of Nursing, followed by our free award-winning pathway programmes PSP and Transition to Uni to prepare students to study a degree, followed by our new Bachelor of Science, then Primary Education, Occupational Therapy, Psychological Science, and our new Bachelor of Business and Enterprise," Mr Robinson said.

"We've had more than a thousand students take part in orientation campus tours at the Gold Coast campus alone, and there's a real buzz back on campus."