

# LUMINO

Luminosity Youth Summit is dynamic national forum uplifting young people to explore dangerous ideas for success. The event ignites creativity, excellence and entrepreneurship and fosters purpose and wellbeing amongst young people aged 15 -25.

## Alumni Stories

**CELEBRATING 12 YEARS OF INSPIRATION**

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**LUMINOSITY YOUTH SUMMIT**





Over 4500  
youth have  
graduated from  
the Luminosity  
Youth Summit  
program from  
2012-2024.

## OUR MISSION

For over a decade this nationally recognised, volunteer powered, not-for-profit organisation and Summit has inspired over 4500 young people, giving them the ability and confidence to become leaders of tomorrow. Our key focus is to provide regional youth equal access to national and international high profile speakers, experts and thought leaders right here on the NSW Mid North Coast to facilitate change in the hearts and minds of young regional delegates.

Speakers and facilitators clearly communicate and are living proof that your academic ability, postcode, financial background or ethnicity do not determine your trajectory for success.

Together our Luminosity team has created an exciting format across the last 12 years – an intensified and exciting two-day program - linking young minds with thought leaders from every walk of life, as they share their stories, skills and strategies to achieve success. The Summit dares to ignite creativity, excellence and entrepreneurship and fosters purpose, resilience and wellbeing amongst youth aged 15 – 25.

Luminosity communicates that anything is possible, that there are many paths, industries and opportunities for success.

Each year the summit format features over 25 incredible thought leaders and facilitators across two HUGE days of mainstage magic and inspiration for over 450 young people with a series of 14 exciting workshops and social events.

Luminosity is thankful for the incredible support to facilitate this unique and life changing leadership experience for young people in our region.

Luminosity Youth Summit 2025 sets the stage to ignite purpose and possibility in our community. Together we can continue to inspire and uplift young regional leaders to identify their passion and take steps to create a lasting and meaningful impact in their own lives and our community.



## Georgia Ryan

Youth Ambassador to the United Nations  
International Council for Dyslexia  
Ambassador for Raising Literacy Australia  
Youth Ambassador for Dyslexia Mid North Coast

As Luminosity celebrates its 12th year, its impact on our community is undeniable. In twelve short years, Luminosity (affectionately known as Lumo) has become part of our Port identity. As a young person growing up in Port, Lumo has not only shown us that we can all dream big, but it also inspired me in ways I never thought possible. Two years ago, I was asked to speak at the United Nations in New York, and if you find it hard to believe a kid from Port spoke at the UN, don't worry I can barely believe it myself! But my journey to the UN really started long before that at Lumo. It was attending my very first Lumo event that sparked in me a desire to help others.

When I first found out I had dyslexia and dysgraphia, nobody seemed to know how best to help me to survive and thrive in school. Nobody seemed to know much about dyslexia, including myself! It was at that time I decided to find out as much as I could about dyslexia and to spread as much awareness as I possibly could. I really wanted to change perceptions and address misconceptions.

In 2018 just after I was formally diagnosed with dyslexia and dysgraphia, I had the most amazing good luck in being able to attend Jessica Watson's keynote speech at Luminosity at only 12-years of age! Meeting Jessica, who is dyslexic herself, and hearing her amazing story, made me think that I too could do something to make a difference. She was such an inspiration that she inspired me to do something. Now I wasn't about to sail around the world, but I did think that somebody should be doing more to help those of us with a learning difference and it was then that I realised that I was somebody and I could do something. Luminosity inspired me to speak up, to stand up and to make a difference.

Hearing and meeting Jessica on that day inspired me to find my own purpose and to advocate for other students



like me that struggle in school. It ignited in me a desire to help others, and it gave me the confidence to speak my own truth and to own it!

It was not long after being inspired at my first Lumo event that I began a nationwide petition to have a compulsory core module on learning differences introduced into every preservice teaching degree, and even though this is not yet mandated, we are getting closer to that goal. I also now have the most amazing honour of being the Youth Ambassador for Dyslexia Mid North Coast and the Ambassador for Raising Literacy Australia, I have run workshops for parents and teachers, given speeches and written articles. I advocate internationally through my social media platforms and talk to and mentor other young dyslexics. I'm committed to bringing the challenges young dyslexics face into the spotlight and advocating for educational equity and all of this came about from that small spark ignited at Luminosity. Lumo made me realise that having dyslexia and struggling at school would not stop me from finding my place in the world.

In 2022 I was asked to become part of an International Council for Dyslexia, which is made up of advocates and organisations from around the world, that advocate for early identification and intervention for every child that struggles with reading and to continue improving teacher education programs and educational practices in the classroom, ensuring all children have equitable opportunity in their learning. As a result, I was invited to the United Nations and my amazing family did everything they could to help me get there.

Being at the UN was such a surreal experience that I think I'm just starting to appreciate its enormity. It was such an incredible honour to even be in the building that is so universally recognised, let alone be given the chance to participate in a meeting involving not only the head of the European Commission (who spoke via videolink), but the heads of UNICEF and UNESCO, organisations we hear about every day and even study.

I am incredibly proud to be one of only two Australian members of the council but as the youngest member, I hope to bring issues that young dyslexics face to the mainstream and to continue to advocate for educational equity.

I loved being part of a meeting where the input from so many and the exchange of ideas helps contribute to finding answers to the challenges those of us with dyslexia face. Knowing we are working towards real change on an international level was a real highlight. I feel positive that there will be future changes and I'm incredibly excited that we might see some tangible outcomes result from the meeting. This exchange of ideas is really what attracted me to Luminosity. I really just wanted to tell my story. To be a young person and to have your voice heard is incredibly powerful and I hope it shows young people everywhere, that if a dyslexic advocate from Port Macquarie can speak at the UN, then anything is possible!

If you're a young person in Port Macquarie then the Luminosity Youth Summit will have become a rite of passage. Our local multi-day event has changed the paradigm in how we engage with young people. Not only is the range and depth of speakers amazing but their passion, commitment and desire to drive real change is infectious. With inspiring speakers, breakout workshops and a range of other fun activities, Luminosity has now become the blueprint in how to inspire and energise young people.

We live in the best place ever and not only because of Port's natural beauty but because our strong sense of community helps so many of us to thrive and to want to give back so much, which is what Lumo gave me. As a Lumo alumni the one thing that I took away from Lumo is that every voice matters - we just have to be brave enough to let it be heard. We are so amazingly lucky to have such a world class event such as Luminosity right here in Port and its impact and reach can never be measured. So, never, ever underestimate the power of igniting even one young person's passion, because who knows, the next Lumo might help to inspire a new generation of change makers.

*Georgia*



## Dave O'Hara

Managing Director  
Techknow IT & Technology Specialists  
Entrepreneur  
Innaugural Luminosity Attendee

I'm Dave O'Hara, Managing Director of Techknow IT & Technology Specialists, and my journey began at the Luminosity Youth Summit in 2013.

**I've always had the drive to do something remarkable, but it was at Luminosity that I found the spark to truly ignite my potential. That summit didn't just light a fire—it gave me the map to follow.**

**The inspiration I gained, and the tools I learned from world-class speakers and incredible mentors, shaped the path I walk today. Luminosity wasn't just an event; it was a life-changing moment.**

**What makes Luminosity so special is that it's more than just a summit—it's a launchpad. It's where big dreams meet the skills and mindset needed to make them a reality. At Luminosity, I learned invaluable leadership skills, the art of building powerful networks, the importance of relentless personal growth, and how to fuel creativity and innovation. These lessons didn't just sit in my notebook—they became the foundation of everything I've accomplished since.**

**For me, the summit wasn't just about learning; it was about doing. It provided the push I needed to take that first leap of faith into the unknown. I left with a burning sense of purpose and a clear direction. And I'm proud to say that within a year of attending, the idea for Techknow was born.**

While many dream of instant success, my story is different. My journey with Techknow wasn't about overnight wins—it was about grit, perseverance, and continuous learning. It's been long days, late nights, and a commitment to self-improvement. But here we are, 10 years later, and Techknow has become Port Macquarie's premium choice for Business and Home IT & Technology services. From humble beginnings, I've grown the company into a trusted name, with over 3,000 clients and a dedicated team of five. We're now planning to expand in 2025, and the journey is far from over.

But it's not just about the numbers. It's about relationships—the trust we've built with our clients and the incredible culture we've fostered within our team. Techknow isn't just a business. It's a testament to the power of vision, passion, and the lessons I learned from Luminosity.

One thing I've always held onto is the importance of finding your "why." When I first started Techknow, my "why" was driven by ambition and hunger for success. Ten years later, my "why" has evolved—now, it's about providing for my beautiful wife and my gorgeous little boy. But no matter where your "why" comes from, it's your constant reminder to push forward on those tough days.

If there's one thing I've learned, it's this: Success is built on compounding effort. Every small step adds up, and once you gain momentum, there's no stopping you. That's the spirit of Luminosity, and it's the spirit of Techknow. You've got to start somewhere—and you've got to start now.

Looking back, I can say without a doubt that Luminosity played a pivotal role in my success. It was the spark, the boost, the push I needed to chase my dreams and make them a reality. And for anyone out there with a dream, Luminosity is that spark for you too.

So, take that leap. Start building. And remember—everything great starts with a vision, a plan, and the courage to take the first step.

*Dave*





# Savannah Bell

Rotary International Exchange Student Brazil  
Chatham High School Graduate

My name is Savannah Bell. I'm 17 years old and I am a graduate student of class 2024 from Chatham High School.

In 2022, I had the incredible opportunity to attend Luminosity with my school. If you've ever heard of the program—or even been fortunate enough to attend—you'll know how impactful it is. For those who haven't, Luminosity is a 2-day event that brings together high school students and motivational speakers. It's not your typical seminar. While many programs end once the speakers leave the stage, Luminosity is different. The speakers mingle with the students during breaks and lunch, offering the chance for deeper conversations and to ask real questions.

I remember a specific seminar that really touched me when I attended. The speakers, Yvonne Halas and Peter Halas are a couple who survived the Holocaust and are also the founders of the swim brand Seafolly. The resilience they displayed in the face of unimaginable hardship, and how they built something extraordinary from it, was nothing short of inspiring.

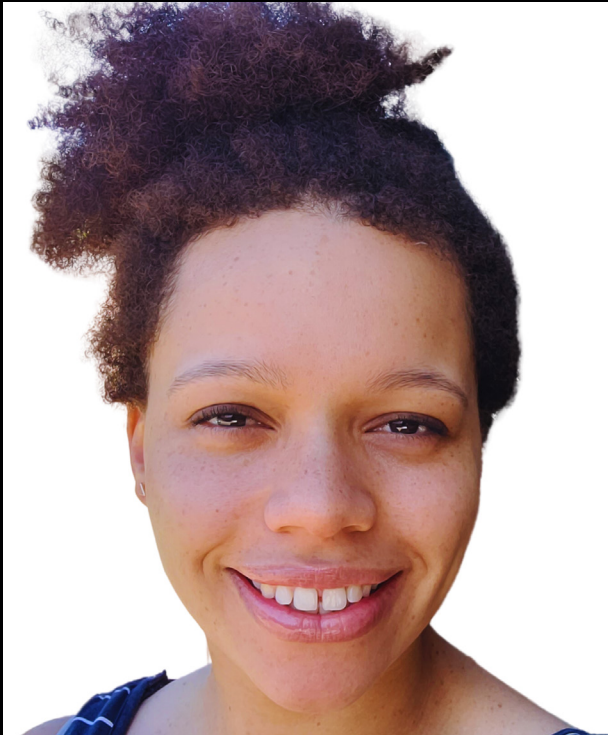
Last year, in 2023, I went to Brazil for a year-long exchange through Rotary. When I was in Brazil, struggling with homesickness or the inevitable challenges of living in a new country, I would remind myself of the people I had met at Luminosity—the speakers, the fellow students, and the life-changing conversations we had. They had shown me that discomfort and adversity were part of the process, not the end of the road. It was a test of my ability to adapt, to push through, and to continue growing.

Since going to Luminosity I have achieved many things like living in Brazil, improving my independence, public speaking, graduating from high school and much more. Next year I plan to do language and linguistics and another course in Portuguese to help with my plan on moving back to Brazil for work.

So, to anyone considering Luminosity, or anyone who feels uncertain about their next step—I'd say take the leap. The experience will stay with you, long after you've left the program. It doesn't just teach you about success; it teaches you how to embrace the journey, however unpredictable it may be. I'm grateful for everything I've learned, and I know there's still so much more to come.

Thank you for listening to my story

*Savannah*



# Sewa Emojong

Director of Esemojong Consultancy  
Youth and Community Projects with Impact  
Innaugural Luminosity Attendee

The Luminosity Youth Summit has played an important role in my personal and professional journey. It is much more than just an event; it's a catalyst for genuine change, growth, and source of inspiration.

## Who and What Inspired Me

The Summit introduced me to a wealth of inspiring speakers whose stories and insights left a lasting impression. Personalities like Matt Purcell, Jack Wilson, L-FRESH The LION, and Prudence Melom shared their journeys with such authenticity and relatability that it sparked something profound in me. Their courage, resilience, and dedication to their crafts reminded me of the limitless potential we all possess when we step into our purpose.

## What I Loved About It

The high-energy, festival-like atmosphere made the event both invigorating and unforgettable. The accessibility of the speakers was a standout feature—I had the privilege of meeting them, sharing meals, and engaging in personal conversations. This level of connection added immense value to the experience. The Summit's attention to detail—from the vibrant location to the well-curated food, music, and program—was next level. Most importantly, it showcased success in its many forms, offering a relatable and genuine glimpse into the diverse paths to achievement.

## Skills and Tools I Took Away

One of the most impactful sessions for me was the Personal Brand and Digital Footprint workshop in 2013. The lessons I learned then still resonate and guide my approach to professional branding today. Equally transformative was the focus on mindset—a theme that has shaped my outlook on challenges and opportunities.

## What I Have Achieved Since Graduating Lumo

The confidence and clarity I gained from the Summit were pivotal in starting my own business venture, E.S. Emojong Consultancy. This venture has opened doors to countless opportunities and helped me expand my skill set. I stepped out of my comfort zone, embraced new challenges, and even launched an artist project - E.S. Malaika. While life brought its share of pauses, like having children, the spark from Luminosity never faded—it ignited my passion for community development and continues to fuel my drive to empower others.

## From Participant to Advocate

After my first Luminosity experience, I was determined to share it with others. Over the years, I've taken numerous young people to the Summit, each time witnessing its transformative impact on their lives. Through providing access to this awesome opportunity, I've seen firsthand how Luminosity plants seeds of confidence, ambition, and vision in those who attend.

Luminosity isn't just a Summit—it's a movement that reminds us of what's possible when we invest in the potential of young people. For me, it was the validation and encouragement I needed to carve my own path, and I'm forever grateful for the journey it set me on.

*Sewa*

# Dr. Mary Bouwer

Doctor with Mid North Coast Health District

I was privileged to attend Luminosity Youth Summit for the first time as a 17yo in 2015 through a school scholarship. The event was an inspiring and motivating couple of days with speakers from across Australia that challenged me to put my dreams into action. Luminosity provided me with the opportunity to meet like minded young people from across the Hastings region and it was there I built some key friendships that I've kept for the past 8 years! I connected with similar aged girl during one of the workshops and together we dreamt up the idea of holding a music event to raise money for young peoples mental health. We met weekly for a couple of months to plan the event which we called 'Beyond Bands' and using our contacts and inspiration from Luminosity, were able to hold the event later that year at the Youth Centre with performances from over 6 different local bands. We attracted about 100 young people to the event and raised \$2000 for Beyond Blue. The event became so popular that we held it a second time the following year and it was run in subsequent years by other friends. Luminosity allowed me to see my true value as a young person and empowered me to work towards addressing big issues affecting our community. Over the past 8 years since then, I've completed a medical degree through the University of NSW and am working as a doctor in our local hospitals.



Mary



# Macy James

Enrolled Nurse and Midwifery Student  
Domestic Violence Awareness Advocate

My name is Macy James and I have been lucky enough to attend Luminosity Youth Summit three times and will be returning for next year.

My journey with Lumo started in 2018 when I 16 when my home and school life were very challenging. I took this opportunity given to me as a way out of school but as it turned it was EXACTLY what I needed to get me out of my teenage angst. I had no idea what Luminosity was, I had never heard of it before but once arriving early in the morning to loud music and a lively crowd I knew I was going to enjoy myself.

In 2018 I met some awesome people with amazing stories about their lives, their challenges and achievements. These inspiring people shared HOW they achieved these things. I met Jessica Watson the girl who sailed solo around the globe at 16yrs old, with me also being 16 at the time it made me realise just how much I was capable of.

I was also able to meet a professional boxer Shelly Watts who won gold at the Commonwealth Games and proceeded to the Olympics. I attended Shelley's master class and was further amazed by her commitment, her journey and accomplishments driven by self-motivation. Shelly also studied committed to her studies and career and was a fully qualified lawyer.

Luminosity that year made me more motivated to go out and just be ME, I tried to ignore everything that wasn't screaming "you got this" and skyrocketed my goals. Some of these goals being: creating a club within my high school to help create the worlds largest knitted white ribbon in the name of domestic violence awareness. I helped set up a senior cafe for hospitality students on the school campus to practice making barista coffee for teachers in the mornings before school started.

By 2019 I was creating clear goals and achieving them, with every end to a goal there was a new one waiting in its place. With the help of Jodie Bird the lovely teacher who first asked me along to Lumo the previous year, we managed to inspire twice the number of students to attend and experience it this time around. I was always



talking about how great the Lumo experience was and how much I got out of it. A whole year later and I was still using the courage from the speakers to say “yes” to everything because opportunity doesn’t always come back a second time.

This year I was the first off the bus and in line to scan my barcode at the entrance telling my friends they will love the MC Andrew Morello. We saw and heard from so many interesting people and we met people from other schools from across the region - some who I still speak to today. Dr Jordan Nguyen an inspiring Biomedical Engineer spoke about how powerful the mind is and what it can accomplish. He had a very inspiring video on his story of helping a young man from Coffs Harbour with severe cerebral palsy through his inventions and technology become independent, drive a car and start his own business. This story really left a positive lasting impression on me.

I was also inspired by Hanshi Kevin Blundell founder and martial arts instructor at Kumiai Ryu Martial Arts. He delivered an action packed master class that was full of practical self-defence skills to keep us safe without causing too much damage to the opponent - it was taught in a way that you wouldn’t easily forget it. There are too many inspiring speakers to list that left an impression on me and helped me become the person I am today.

Following the summit of 2019 I was inspired to give back to my community. I completed the Relay for Life with my amazing team, it’s 24hrs of non-stop walking on a laid-out track in attempt to raise awareness of cancers of any sort. I was there to support breast cancer and liver cancer however I met so many great people there my knowledge on it all expanded so much in those 24hrs.

After graduating high school, I had my heart set on becoming a midwife, however my ATAR wasn’t the best and I faltered for a while in what I wanted to do. Eventually I realised that I am capable of anything if I just keep saying yes to opportunities - something that I learned from my experience at Luminosity.

So yes, I went and got my RSA and RCG because I was asked I if wanted to do it with a friend, and yes, I went to TAFE to get my Education Support Certificate III. My first stable job was in the kitchen of small local pub, it was a lovely job, but I had to keep exploring I wanted more, and I knew I could have it. I halted my mission briefly when I had my daughter in 2021 but by 2022, I got a job at Sushi Parlor and I worked my way up to being manager, my boss encouraged me to achieve my goals whenever I could. In 2023 I was happy where I was, I had enough money to buy a nice car, I had my own house, but I knew I could do more and wanted to do more.

I had my son in October on 2023 and following that I was really looking forward to doing more with my life. In 2024 I was called in to do a modelling seminar six mths post-partum- I was nervous to say the least, but I said yes and I went, and I loved it. I said yes and did not regret it, the whole time I was thanking the inspiration Luminosity had given me to fight through scary situations because the outcome will be great and amazing.

Because of this I messaged my teacher I had back in high school five years ago and said, “Hey do you think I’d be able to attend Lumo this year with my younger sister?” I wanted her to experience the same as I had and take the lessons I had into her own life. Thanks to the support of this loving teacher Jodie who always showed the students and people around her that we were able to attend.

My younger sister is 16 years old this year and the stories I told her over the years of Luminosity made her extremely excited for the summit. There were so many speakers with empowerment to spread and being able to watch my sister soak up all that confidence and knowledge and use it, was a major highlight for me.

It is now December of 2024, and together we still have long conversations on how it helped us and how we use it in pursuing our dreams. This year after attending Lumo I was once again inspired to do something courageous ( just like 2018 and 2019). In the July following the summit I once again applied to become an Enrolled Nurse and was successful in that enrolment.

The summit has inspired me to say to so many experiences and opportunities: this year I attended Agquip and took not one but two helicopter rides - something I would not have done before Luminosity!! I secured a coveted place in a three-day modelling program, I studied and obtained my motorbike license and went horse riding for the first time.....and next year is yet to come! But I am so looking forward to Luminosity, I have told so many young people and they are looking forward to being a part of this life changing experience in 2025!

*Macy*



# Jorja Schofield

Biomedical Engineering Student UNSW  
Neurological Research focussing on Mutliple Sclerosis

For me Luminosity was such a powerful experience that I had the pleasure of attending twice in 2022 and 2023. Lumo showed me that our voices and actions as young people can have an impact. Being a young person I think we often feel like we don't have a voice to make a difference and that our actions don't matter. In reality, our voice and actions have a rippling effect on society.

Luminosity was such an enjoyable experience that stands out from other events. Mainly, its ability to bring young people together with like-minded thoughts and ideas and then allowing us to have mature and meaningful conversations is unique. Additionally, being able to hear from a range of inspiring people with valuable stories has a large impact on young minds.

In 2022 when I went to my first Lumo I was able to hear from and meet Dr. Jordan Nguyen. It was incredible to hear about Dr. Jordan Nguyen's journey and how he ended up becoming a Biomedical engineer. It was inspiring how his idea of a mind-controlled wheelchair came to life and the impact one person's idea can have on people's lives around the world.

After hearing from many speakers it was evident that everyday people have the capability to change lives. This

has inspired me to go to University and start my degree in a Bachelors of Biomedical Science with an end goal of becoming a Neurologist focussing on Multiple Sclerosis research. After my two years of experiencing luminosity youth summit, I was extremely inspired to grow my leadership skills and do the most I could for my school and community at the time.

I have always had a huge passion for all things STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) and the more I became involved in this area the more I saw the lack of involvement and encouragement for young girls in this field. Therefore, to enact change, I established a girls in STEM group at my school to encourage more girls to pursue their passion for STEM.

Additionally, as captain of my school's robotics team, I set out to make it more inclusive and welcoming to young girls. Furthermore, being a strong advocate for women in STEM encouraged me to attend seminars and events to inspire young girls to be more involved in the field.

Attending Luminosity inspired me to make youth voices more heard within communities so I decided to take action on this. I attended Youth conventions representing my school to the NSW government about things that can be improved in public education from a student's perspective. In addition, I encouraged the start of the Port Macquarie Hastings youth council to allow for a safe and inclusive space for young people in our community to express their concerns and ideas in order to make a difference. My efforts lead me to be awarded young leader of the year for the Port Macquarie Hastings region in 2023.

The Luminosity Youth Summit is such an incredible experience in Port Macquarie for so many young people and I know that a lot of youth look forward to it every year. Lumo helps ignite a spark for young people to encourage them to follow their passion and make an impactful change to society.

*Jorja*



# John Palencia

Registered Nurse (Mental Health)  
2023 Regional Youth Taskforce Member  
Young Leaders Council Headspace  
Luminosity Crew Member

The 2022 Luminosity Youth Summit is an event that I will always remember. Truthfully, I did not know what to expect when I got a letter saying that I had won a free ticket, but I was excited to meet like-minded people and curious to see first-hand what the event entailed.

Although I attended the event by myself, I was never lonely, and I'm glad to say that I have friends that I've met from Lumo who I'm still in contact with today. Everyone was all very welcoming, and the speakers all shared amazing stories and lessons which I'm glad that I and other young people had the opportunity to receive.

The three days of Lumo were intense - I felt awe and inspiration every day and learnt so much. It was refreshing to see remarkable individuals who have achieved incredible things open about the challenges they've had to face and how they've succeeded despite them. So many of the speakers resonated with me on a deep level, and while listing them in my mind, I'd realised that I noted almost all of them! One speaker who has made a tremendous impact on me, however, was Nadine Champion. As a young person who has struggled with self-doubt, her demonstration on the power of

10-seconds of courage is something that I'll carry with me forever. By her giving me the chance to go outside of my comfort zone and break a wooden board in front of everyone, she has made me - and by extension, every other young person in the audience - remember that we are capable of so much more than we think.

Since attending the Luminosity Youth Summit as a delegate, I was given the opportunity to join the Lumo family in 2023 as a crew member, volunteering to give back to the event that inspired me so profoundly. This year, I returned to the Luminosity Youth Summit as a speaker, sharing my insights as part of the mental health panel. It was an honour to contribute to the event that has had such a huge impact on regional youth, and stand in the same stage as so those who have inspired me.

Outside of my involvement with Lumo, I served as the 2023 Regional Youth Taskforce member for the North Coast which involved providing consultation to community organisations and the NSW Youth Minister to address issues faced by regional youth.

Currently, I have been working as a new graduate registered nurse across Integrated Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs department in Coffs Harbour. This role has been deeply fulfilling, offering me the opportunity to witness the rawness of the human experience and grow immensely both personally and professionally. I thoroughly enjoy being a nurse in mental health, and I find it a privilege to be able to walk alongside others during the peaks and troughs of their recovery journey.

I have also been volunteering as a Young Leaders Council member for Headspace, working to promote mental health and wellbeing among young people at community events and am training for my first full marathon after completing my first half-marathon in 2023.

A long-time dream of mine has been to travel, and I've since had the opportunity to explore Asia both solo and with friends. These adventures have enriched my perspective on life and deepened my appreciation for new experiences and ways of living. I look forward to doing more travel and meeting more friends from across the world in the future.

Looking ahead, I feel a mix of excitement and uncertainty about the future. While my aspirations in social entrepreneurship—particularly in the realm of mental health and wellbeing—continue to grow, I remain open to exploring new opportunities to give back and make a difference. For those on the fence about whether they should attend the Luminosity Youth Summit, I would urge you to seize their opportunity to attend with both hands - it's a decision you'll be glad you've made.

*John*



# Benji Mathews

School Captain  
Hastings Secondary College -  
Westport Campus

I was lucky enough to receive a full scholarship to attend Luminosity in 2023 and was very blessed to attend again in 2024.

I was so inspired by the speakers and their unique stories. In 2023 Ellie Cole ( Paralympian) spoke about how her life-changing cancer diagnosis at the tender age of two that led to a change of direction and ultimately her life.

She lost her leg to cancer and swimming was a part of her rehabilitation. What inspired me was despite her loss she found with in herself a true grit and a deep passion and turned out to be really good at it - something that took her all the way to the Paralympics.

In 2024 Ben Pettingill spoke about his sudden loss of eyesight at age 16 and how that did not stop him from reaching his full potential. One of his main points that made me really think was that "he now sees clearer than ever before using newfound forms of vision, True and Limitless Vision."

If Ellie and Ben can push through these hardships then I can too.

I love the energy of Luminosity. I loved listening to the incredible line of up of speakers and the hands on masterclasses were great. The amazing food and fun was a bonus.

Luminosity has given me so many skills and practical tools that I have taken away into my life back home. It gave me a boost of confidence. It fuelled my motivation to want to do more in my school and face my fears of public speaking.

Since graduating from my 2024 experience of Luminosity. I have been more active in my school community. I began to serve others more and give wherever I could.

From an early age, I had always dreamed of becoming a school leader. However, I can relate to Ben and Ellie in different ways, as I was diagnosed with a speech impairment. I developed a stutter a couple of years ago due to feeling anxious about what others thought of me. In a way, I had no idea how I could achieve my dreams, but since going to Luminosity and hearing other speakers overcoming their struggles the summit experience made me think I can do it too.

Over the last two years, I have stepped out bit by bit and volunteered and helped. At the beginning of this year (Year 11) I decided to go for House Captain.... and succeeded. The second half of this year ( despite my original fears) I put my hand up to become School Captain for 2025 and was very humbled to have achieved this great privilege. I am extremely grateful for the Luminosity Youth Summit and the inspiration it has given me to overcome my fears and achieve my dreams.

*Benji*





# Will Doeland

Banking Officer ANZ Bank  
Personal Support Worker  
Activities Manager at Centre of Gravity

Last year on my birthday I received a text from my mate that read "Oi would you wanna go to Luminosity and happy birthday bro" I had never been to Luminosity so I looked into it. The event looked so good I booked a spot the same day (with my birthday money). And it was a great experience that I and many others got immense value out of. On the first day I was greeted, got a goodies bag and a lanyard with my name on it, now that's vip. I had never been a part of an event like Luminosity before, it's one thing to watch people on YouTube, (yeh its cool) but there's a certain energy that is exchanged from being in a room full of hungry young people listening and interacting with each other and the speakers who are at the top of their fields, it just fired me up!

One speaker that stood out to me in particular was Dan Flynn of Thank you, he told a story of how he was wanting to expand into Coles and Woolworths with thankyou products. They had both said no to him for five years. So he raised an army on social media and flew a massive banner attached to a helicopter around the Coles and Woolworths head offices campaigning for them to stock

Thankyou water and it worked! This showed me the power of persistence and grit, if you want something you have to go out and get it, you can't just sit around hoping it will come. This resonated with me in regards to business ideas I was working on. I attended every extra event at Luminosity because I wanted to make the most out of it. The first extra event was the open mic night at the top of Rydges where people got to share their love of music. The creators of Luminosity have built such a genuine culture of encouragement, everyone at the open mic night was so encouraging to each other. I overheard the Rydges staff say with shock "they are all so encouraging" it was truly a magical atmosphere.

Now I can't describe Luminosity without bringing up the food which was good, yes very good, each day we all marched into Rydges with our lanyards proving our Lumo 2022 status where we enjoyed a generous spread for lunch. Throughout the event I got to network and meet many great people, I still keep in contact with some even today, "anyone remember John?" John and I have been encouraging each other as we hit milestones and keep pursuing our dreams. When going to a Post Malone concert you expect to meet Post Malone fans. The same goes with Luminosity you attend expecting to meet people who are driven, who dream and want more out of life. This is the standard that Luminosity has fostered.

I have recommended it to friends and will continue to recommend it because Luminosity is encouraging, inspiring and creating the next generation of leaders. I will continue to attend Luminosity and maybe one day I will have something of my own to share and encourage other people with, just like they have encouraged me.

It's been two and a bit years later after attending Lumo 22' and I can definitely say that it has been a crucial part of both my personal and professional development. I still can vividly remember positive energy in the glasshouse each day. The lessons I learnt there I continue to use in my professional life where I work at ANZ bank in the week helping people with their money, assisting people who have mental and physical disabilities live a more fulfilling lives as support worker on the week nights, and ensure children have an awesome birthday party at Center of Gravity where I work on the weekends. I will continue to recommend Luminosity!

Thank you and God Bless



# Danni Dorrington

Provisional Psychologist  
Master of Professional Psychology Program  
School Psychologist (MNC)

I was incredibly fortunate to have attended Luminosity in 2017 as a university student representative for Charles Sturt University. That year, we had some incredible presenters, including Andrew Morello, Ben Pettingill, and Amna Karra-Hassan. However, the highlight for me was Sam Webb's talk about his mental health charity, LIVIN. Sam shared his personal journey, including the challenges he and his best mate faced with mental health, which ultimately led to the creation of LIVIN. His talk was deeply captivating, especially his message about the challenges men face when accessing mental health support and the critical need to reduce stigma.

As a psychology student at the time, I found myself deeply inspired by Sam's story, and it further fuelled my passion for psychology and mental health. For me, Luminosity represented the positive and vibrant atmosphere that I thrive on. It inspired me to aspire to become a speaker one day, sharing my own passion for mental health with others. I love the idea of inspiring the youth of tomorrow and potentially being that person with whom a student resonates, encouraging them to pursue a career in mental health.

Luminosity gave me the courage to strive for something bigger. The workshops helped build confidence, encourage others, and emphasized the importance of being true to oneself, as that's when we shine the most. Listening to these incredible speakers share their passion

ignited a spark in me that still burns seven years later, and I continue to work to keep that spark alive and pass it on to others.

Since attending Luminosity, my journey has been long and unpredictable, but I wouldn't change it. After graduating in 2018 with a Bachelor of Psychology, I decided to travel and experience the world for two years. When I returned, I realised that a standard psychology degree alone doesn't open many doors, so I took on a caseworker role to build experience and pave my way into mental health.

In 2022, after being a mother to twins for a year, I took a leap of faith and applied for a spot in the Master of Professional Psychology program, which included a school psychologist scholarship. I say it was a leap of faith because I had no idea I would be accepted, given how competitive the program was. When I received the acceptance email, I went from surprise to shock and thinking, "How am I going to manage this as a full-time mum with 1-year-old twins?".

After a very hectic year in 2023, supported by my amazing family and friends, I graduated from my master's program. Fast forward to December 2024, I have spent the last year completing my internship as a provisional psychologist working full-time in schools, whilst balancing my internship requirements, my family commitments, and still having some sort of a social life, I'm now just weeks away from becoming a fully registered psychologist, with massive dreams, aspirations, and plans for my future. Now I can hear most of you thinking, "wow I never realised how long it takes to become a psychologist", it is absolutely a profession that embeds the saying 'it's not a sprint, it's a marathon', which I was quick to learn in a couple of years into my degree. My passion is absolutely the driving force that keeps me going, no matter what challenges arise, and I know I've got so much to give to those in need.

This journey hasn't been without setbacks and barriers, but I always strive not to let them deter me from achieving what I am passionate about. At the same time, I'm very good at setting boundaries, engaging in self-care, and prioritizing what matters most. I do this not only in the best interest of my family but also to ensure I can give my best to those I work with.

We all need to remember that if we are not feeling like our best self in that moment, we cannot give the best version of our self that the people we work with need and deserve.

Luminosity is such an important experience for young people across the region to connect, learn and grow. The energy and spirit of the summit has inspired me and will continue to live on in the work I do to help others in their mental health journey.

*Danni*



# Christa Morrow

High School Teacher Mackillop College Port Macquarie  
Inaugural Luminosity Attendee

Attending Luminosity in Year 10 and 11 (2012 & 13) wasn't just an event—it was the spark that ignited a passion for growth and action in my life. I was captivated by the incredible speakers who shared their stories of resilience, creativity, and courage. Through their words, I learned about entrepreneurial thinking, the importance of social justice, and the power of stepping out of my comfort zone.

Luminosity gave me more than just inspiration; it equipped me with practical skills like speaking confidently, building relationships, and embracing brave decisions. These lessons became the foundation for the steps I took after the event. One of those steps was a journey to the Philippines, where I had the privilege of working with a few families to help them create sustainable incomes through agriculture. It was an experience that deepened my understanding of social justice and showed me the real impact of empowering others.



Inspired by this, I began studying teaching—a profession where I could share these lessons and inspire young people to find their own paths to make a difference. This year, I've had the incredible opportunity to guide some of my students to attend Luminosity. Watching them absorb the same lessons that shaped me has been one of the most rewarding parts of my career. Beyond the classroom, I'm also serving my community through youth ministry. Whether it's leading retreats or building leadership skills, I've been fortunate to see the incredible potential in the young people around me.

Luminosity taught me to dream big, act bravely, and connect with purpose. It's a message I now pass on to the next generation, and I couldn't be more grateful for where this journey has taken me.

*Christa*



# Luke Aguila

Software Developer  
Recreational Pilot  
Luminosity Youth Summit Crew Member

In 2019, I entered a competition for a scholarship to attend the Luminosity Youth Summit, not fully knowing what to expect but buzzing with excitement. From the moment I stepped in, I was swept up in the summit's dynamic energy. The room was alive with inspiration, creativity, and the shared ambition of like-minded young people ready to explore their potential.

One of the standout moments for me was hearing Dr. Jordan Nguyen, a visionary biomedical engineer, speak. His work on assistive technologies was jaw-dropping, from developing devices using electrooculography—such as a mind-controlled wheelchair—to creating a mind-controlled buggy. Having been deeply involved in mechatronics through the global FIRST Robotics Competition (a challenge where teams design and program robots to perform tasks in intense, strategic matches), I was captivated. Seeing how Dr. Nguyen combined robotics and medicine inspired me to double down on my passion for programming and mechatronics throughout high school and beyond.

Another transformative moment came from Nadine Champion, a martial artist, motivational speaker, and cancer survivor. Her mantra, “10 seconds of courage,” has stayed with me ever since. It’s a powerful reminder that no matter how much passion or inspiration you have, it’s the courage in those frightening moments to take action that turns dreams into reality.

And then there was Cosentino, Australia’s most successful illusionist. Sitting in the front row, I watched in amazement as he performed mind-bending tricks, like solving a Rubik’s cube without even appearing to move his hands. It was pure magic and a testament to what’s possible when mastery and creativity collide.

Luminosity was a pivotal experience, showing me that extraordinary achievements aren’t just the stuff of news stories—they’re the work of real people who began just like me. As Andrew Morello, the summit’s MC, so aptly put it: “The meaning of life is the people you meet and what you create.”

Fast forward to today, I’m honored to have been part of the Luminosity Youth Summit Crew for the past two years, helping to run the very event that shaped so much of my journey. I’m now a software developer, a recreational pilot, and an aspiring entrepreneur. I hope to inspire others to chase their passions because the world is full of incredible opportunities and people willing to help you along the way.

*Luke*

## ALUMNI QUOTES

The inspiration I gained, and the tools I learned from world-class speakers and incredible mentors, shaped the path I walk today. Luminosity wasn't just an event; it was a life-changing moment.

*What makes Luminosity so special is that it's more than just a summit—it's a launchpad. It's where big dreams meet the skills and mindset needed to make them a reality.* At Luminosity, I learned invaluable leadership skills, the art of building powerful networks, the importance of relentless personal growth, and how to fuel creativity and innovation. These lessons didn't just sit in my notebook—they became the foundation of everything I've accomplished since.

For me, the summit wasn't just about learning; it was about doing. It provided the push I needed to take that first leap of faith into the unknown. I left with a burning sense of purpose and a clear direction. And I'm proud to say that within a year of attending, the idea for my business was born.

**DAVE O'HARA**

Luminosity gave me the courage to strive for something bigger. The workshops helped build confidence, encourage others, and emphasized the importance of being true to oneself, as that's when we shine the most. Listening to these incredible speakers share their passion *ignited a spark in me that still burns seven years later*; and I continue to work to keep that spark alive and pass it on to others.

**DANNI DORRINGTON**

If you're a young person in Port Macquarie then the Luminosity Youth Summit will have become a rite of passage. Our local multi-day event has changed the paradigm in how we engage with young people. Not only is the range and depth of speakers amazing but their passion, commitment and desire to drive real change is infectious. With inspiring speakers, breakout workshops and a range of other fun activities, Luminosity has now become the blueprint in how to inspire and energise young people.

We live in the best place ever and not only because of Port's natural beauty but because our strong sense of community helps so many of us to thrive and to want to give back so much, which is what Lumo gave me. *As a Lumo alumni the one thing that I took away from Lumo is that every voice matters – we just have to be brave enough to let it be heard.* We are so amazingly lucky to have such a world class event such as Luminosity right here in Port and its impact and reach can never be measured. *So, never, ever underestimate the power of igniting even one young person's passion, because who knows, the next Lumo might help to inspire a new generation of change makers.*

**GEORGIA RYAN**



# Molly Langley

Founder of The Fijian School Project  
Student lawyer

## What I loved about Luminosity:

My most memorable take away from the youth summit was attending a session with Jade Weller and learning about her Jadestarts coaching program. Jade inspired me by sharing her story of completing a law degree and the doors this opened up for her in her career. She shared ideas on how to maintain freedom and creativity in your life and career that stick with me today.

## What skills and tools I took away from Luminosity:

My biggest take aways came from the master classes I attended : '7 things I would tell my teenage self and how to kick start a career in social entrepreneurship.' Having recently graduated high school when I attended luminosity, it was great to receive advice from experts in their field around how they would navigate their youth to put them selves in the best position for opportunity and growth in their junior careers. Additionally, learning valuable insights into social entrepreneurship encouraged me to think about how I can work as an individual or with groups of likeminded people to create positive change around and implements solutions for social, cultural and environmental problems.

## Achievements post attendance:

When I attended the luminosity conference I had just started my Bachelor of Laws degree with Southern Cross University. After hearing Jade Weller speak about the opportunities that completing her Law degree bought for her I was very motivated and inspired to pursue the degree. I have graduated from Southern Cross University and will be commencing the practical legal training component of my degree with Mid North Coast Legal Centre in January of 2025. Having been involved in the Fijian School Project since age 16 where I volunteer my time in Fiji, I had an insight into the rewarding experience of volunteering. I then went on to start my own not for profit cross cultural tour company where I led educational excursions in partnership with Australian schools and Fijian schools. I went on to become a keynote speaker at local school and employment organisations, sharing my experiences in Fiji with young people in Australia with the hope of inspiring others to contribute to meaningful change in the world. One of most recent achievements was contributing to the construction of a student learning facility at Drasa Secondary School in Fiji, that was the first of its kind in the country. I had the opportunity to be in Fiji for the opening of this project in August 2024 and it was amazing to witness the gratitude of the local students who are eager to learn in the facility.

Further, I had an amazing opportunity to explore Costa Rica, Nicaragua and the Mentawai Islands in Indonesia running surf and wellness retreats throughout 2024. This job allowed me to enhance my cultural awareness and connect with local people and communities, whilst sharing my passion for surfing with others.

I had the opportunity to work with Uniting Children Youth and Families as a community connector for the Nambucca Valley. I played an integral role in bringing all levels of the community together to facilitate conversations and action for youth in the valley. I feel very privileged to be able to work closely with the community to create projects that promote an enhanced quality of life, engagement in education and becoming work ready.

Molly



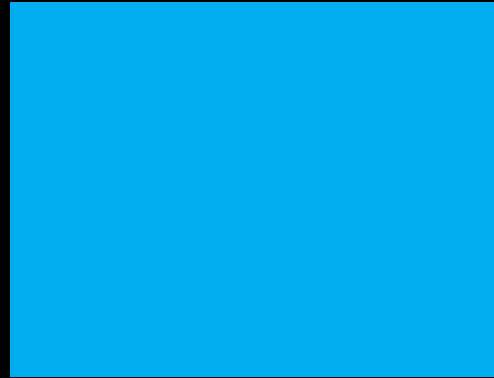


## Bianca Adkins

Founder of The Lemonade Crew

Attending the Luminosity Youth Summit has been a truly transformative experience for me, and its impact continues to shape my life in profound ways. When I first joined as a guest, I was captivated by the energy, creativity, and passion that infused every moment of the event. The following year, I had the incredible honor of stepping onto the stage as a speaker—a challenge that pushed me beyond my comfort zone and allowed me to share my deeply personal story of resilience after losing my husband to MND. This experience was so meaningful and rewarding that I felt compelled to become more deeply involved. The next year, I proudly joined the team as a volunteer.

Luminosity is far more than just a two-day forum. It's a vibrant, life-changing space where young people aged 15-25 are inspired to explore "dangerous ideas for success."



Through keynotes, workshops, masterclasses, and interactive sessions led by high-profile presenters and local business leaders from across Australia and beyond, attendees are immersed in an environment that fosters creativity, purpose, and well-being.

Over the three years I've been involved, I've witnessed firsthand how the summit ignites a spark in every young person who attends. Each presenter leaves an indelible mark, offering wisdom and encouragement that resonates long after the event ends. Watching the attendees—so attentive, captivated, laughing, crying, and connecting—has been one of the most uplifting experiences of my life. I see them leave as changed individuals, brimming with confidence and ready to tackle new challenges.

The volunteers at Luminosity are a true family, united by a shared commitment to transforming the lives of young people. Their dedication and passion inspire me every day, and being part of this team has been nothing short of extraordinary.

As someone who didn't have access to an event like Luminosity when I was younger, I can't help but marvel at its potential to change lives. I am endlessly grateful for the summit's impact on me and on so many others. I never want to miss another Luminosity summit and look forward to continuing this incredible journey of growth and inspiration.

*Bianca*



## Oliver Westman

Teacher  
Bach of Education (K-12)  
Graduate Charles Sturt University  
Youth Education Advocate  
Mentor at the 2024 National Leadership  
Camp/National Leadership Forum

Growing up in Grafton on the North Coast of NSW and moving to Port Macquarie for university in 2022, I've always been extremely passionate about youth advocacy, education, and leadership. Being featured as alumni of the Luminosity Youth Summit feels like a full-circle moment for me. The 2024 Summit was a profound experience where I had the privilege of participating as a panellist on the Ignite Youth Panel. It was an amazing opportunity to bring my passion, vision, and motivation to the stage, engaging delegates in an optimistic discussion about the future of education. For me, the Summit was all about energy and inspiration, harnessing a space that serves as an example that change can begin with a single opportunity and bold vision.

The Luminosity Youth Summit holds a special place in my heart because it provides young people, especially those from regional and remote communities, with a chance to be seen, heard, and valued. It wasn't just about ticking boxes; it was about amplifying our dreams and treating them as the visionary ideas they are; ideas from future leaders. Personally, I found immense value in the Summit's ability to connect young people with extraordinary speakers, meaningful peer relationships, and transformative opportunities to explore our values and beliefs. Its regional focus resonated deeply with me, empowering me to see the untapped potential in my community.



Reflecting on my time at the Summit, I can see how much it shaped me. I learned the importance of asking thoughtful questions, sparking meaningful conversations, and using my voice to inspire others. Notably, I walked away with a powerful insight. Young people in regional areas are incredibly capable and driven, they just need someone to give them a shot.

That realization has become a cornerstone of my dedication to empowering youth from communities like mine.

Since the Summit, I've taken drastic strides in my career, community involvement, and leadership journey. In 2024, I was proud to facilitate and mentor at the National Leadership Camp and National Leadership Forum, helping to inspire young leaders from across Australia and the world. I've also shared my story and encouraged others to find their voice and purpose at events hosted by Charles Sturt University. Closer to home, I've been working as a Student Learning and Support Officer in a local primary school and recently began teaching at a high school after gaining my conditional accreditation with the NSW Department of Education. One of the most exciting moments of this journey was being offered a position with the Youth Leadership Academy Australia for their National Tour in 2025.



What drives me most is my commitment to authenticity, community, and love, the values that guide everything I do. Whether through education, leadership, or politics, I'm passionate about advocating for regional and remote youth, amplifying their voices, and ensuring they have access to the opportunities they deserve.

Looking back, the Luminosity Youth Summit was a turning point in my life. It gave me the clarity, motivation, and confidence to pursue my passions. While I don't know exactly what the future holds, I know that programs like Luminosity have shown me, and countless others that extraordinary things are possible when opportunity meets communities like ours. With the right support and a willingness to dream big, young people from regional and remote areas can truly thrive. That's the future I'm working towards.



*Oliver*

# *Past themes*

**INSPIRE | CHALLENGE | EXCEL  
DANGEROUS IDEAS FOR SUCCESS  
YOUR IDEA | YOUR COMMUNITY | YOUR WORLD  
LIVE | LOVE | LEAD  
INSPIRE | CHALLENGE | EXCEL  
COURAGE | COLLABORATE | CREATE  
COMPASSION | VISION | INNOVATION  
COURAGE | CREATIVITY | CONNECTION  
COURAGE | CURIOSITY  
PURPOSE | POSSIBILITY**





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LUMINO

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