

# The Country Universities Centre 2022



Country  
Universities  
Centre  
DEGREES CLOSER



## OUR VISION

To empower regional people by  
building highly-connected  
learning communities and  
opportunities for a vibrant and  
prosperous future







# Empowering regional people

## Challenges to regional higher education

Regional people are less than half as likely to gain a bachelor qualification compared to their metropolitan counterparts. Existing initiatives to improve higher education access have failed to increase the participation rates of regional Australians, which have remained stagnate at around 20% for over 30 years. These initiatives are often prescribed to regional communities by either government or universities, rather than being community owned, operated, and supported.

## Local solutions

Successful regional development is led by local communities and aligned with regional strengths. The Country Universities Centre (CUC) model is designed and developed by regional people for regional people and their communities to provide equitable access to higher education. It is both a grassroots and agile model.

Each Centre is owned, governed, and driven by its local community through an independent Board of Directors. This framework provides for place-based learning solutions. The CUC can respond quickly to the unique higher education challenges and needs of local communities.”

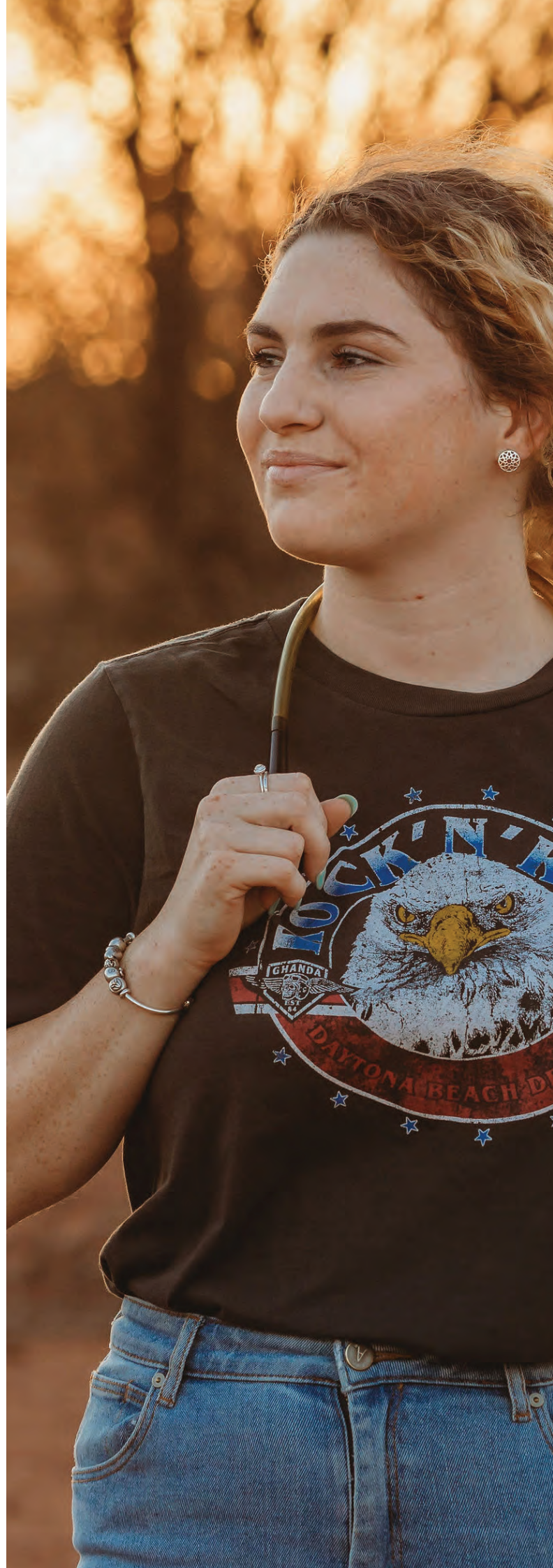


# Support where it is needed

The CUC operates in communities where universities cannot or will not go, from the coast to the outback, with the common goal of developing equitable access to higher education.

## **CUC communities have the following characteristics:**

- Strong local community support
- Significant distance from existing university infrastructure
- High representation of students from equity groups such as Regional, low socioeconomic status (SES), and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Low higher education participation and bachelor attainment rates in the region
- Small to medium-sized regional towns
- Clear regional development goals



# CUC Network



- 2013**  
CUC Snowy Monaro (*Cooma*)
- 2018**  
CUC Goulburn (*Goulburn*)  
CUC Far West (*Broken Hill*)
- 2019**  
CUC Clarence Valley (*Grafton*)  
CUC North West (*Narrabri and Moree*)  
CUC Western Riverina (*Griffith and Leeton*)
- 2020**  
CUC Parkes (*Parkes*)
- 2021**  
CUC Bass Coast (*Wonthaggi*)  
CUC Macleay Valley (*Kempsey*)  
CUC Maranoa (*Roma*)  
CUC Balonne (*St George and Dirranbandi*)  
CUC Southern Shoalhaven (*Ulladulla*)
- 2022**  
CUC Ovens Murray (*Wangaratta, Corryong and Mansfield*)  
CUC Cowra Region (*Cowra*)  
CUC Mudgee Region (*Mudgee*)





# Learning community

Local student networks  
with face-to-face support  
from Centre Managers and  
Learning Skills Advisors



*"Before discovering the CUC, I was on the cusp of giving up on studies and meeting the course deadlines. My home environment and poor internet access led to a lot of frustration. Before attending the centre, I felt like I was on my own..."*

**CUC Clarence Valley Student**





## Student support

CUC students choose to study a diverse range of courses from over 40 different Australian universities. The CUC has responded to student needs and created an innovative model that can support any student, studying any course, at any Australian university.

The wrap-around model of student support provides face-to-face academic, wellbeing, technology, and administrative support in addition to what each student's university already provides.

These extra layers of support are crucial for many students who study with the CUC. Regional online students are often at greater risk of attrition. Many students are from low SES backgrounds, are the first in their family to attend university, or have caring and multiple other responsibilities.

The CUC offers a free and welcoming place to study with flexible and personalised face-to-face support within a local learning community. This empowers students to enrol in the degree of their choice from any Australian university with the knowledge they will be supported locally.

# Dedicated study spaces



The CUC provides quiet study spaces with high-speed internet and face-to-face student support away from the distractions of home for any student studying at any Australian university.

## High-tech facilities

Students can use workstations with dual screens or bring-their-own-device and access high speed internet (at least 100mbps), printing, copying and video conferencing. Students can also use dedicated online exam spaces or supervised exam rooms.

## Collaboration

One of the most difficult aspects of studying via distance is social isolation. Collaborative spaces encourage students to be part of a learning community where they can connect with other students in their region.

## Versatile spaces

Each Centre has adaptable tutorial rooms that are fitted out with video conferencing facilities and can host tutorials, workshops, intensives, group work or exams.

## Flexible access

Students need flexibility as they are often balancing study with work and family commitments. Centres are staffed during business hours and are accessible to students via swipe card 7 am to midnight, seven days a week.



# Our impact

**1149**  
STUDENTS

registered with  
the CUC and  
they studied

**673**  
COURSES

THROUGH  
**40**  
different  
Australian  
universities

We are located in **18 communities**  
across **NSW, QLD and VIC**

## CUC STUDENTS

**98%** Regional or remote  
classification

**67%** Low socio-economic  
status (IEO Index)

**7.1%** of students identify  
as Aboriginal or  
Torres Strait Islander

**49%** First in family  
to attend university

**60%** of students are  
25 years of age  
or older

## 2021 STUDENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY FOUND

**99%** of students found  
CUC staff to be very  
or extremely helpful

**91%** of students felt that using  
the CUC helped to improve  
their academic results

**94%** of students believe the  
CUC has made it easier  
to stay, study or work  
in their community

**92%** are more likely to continue  
with their studies as a result  
of the help that they received  
from the CUC.

Local volunteer and in-kind  
contributions have exceeded

**\$3.8 million**



# Bringing degrees closer to regional, rural and remote Australia



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