

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.

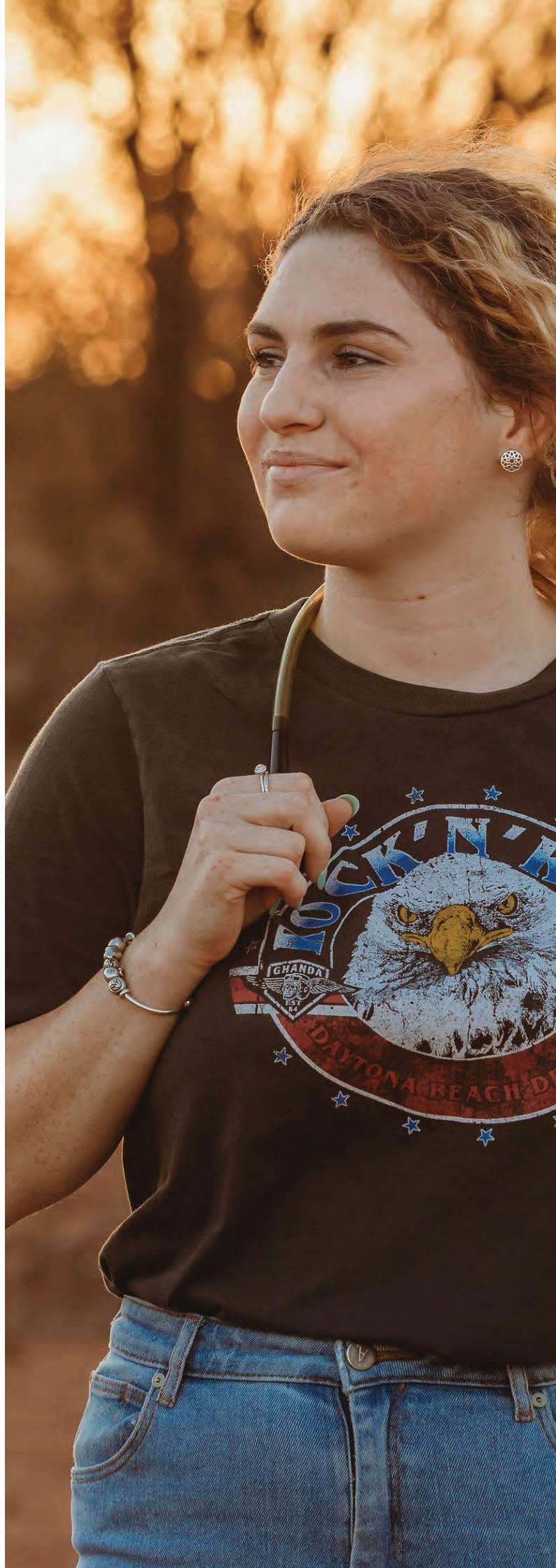
Each Centre is owned, governed, and driven by its local community through an independent Board of Directors. This framework provides for place-based learning solutions. The CUC can respond quickly to the unique higher education challenges and needs of local communities.”

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.

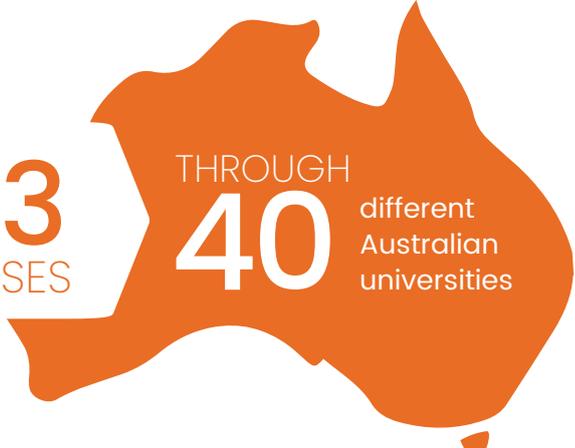
Our impact

1149
STUDENTS

registered with
the CUC and
they studied

673
COURSES

THROUGH
40
different
Australian
universities

An orange silhouette map of Australia is positioned on the right side of the infographic, partially overlapping the '40' statistic.

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

CUC STUDENTS

98% Regional or remote
classification

7.1% of students identify
as Aboriginal or
Torres Strait Islander

60% of students are
25 years of age
or older

67% Low socio-economic
status (IEO Index)

49% First in family
to attend university

2021 STUDENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY FOUND

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

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

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

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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