



Where country talent grows at
home for the country's future

Strategic Plan

2026–2029

COUNTRY UC LTD



Australian Government

*Supported by the Australian
Government through the Regional
University Study Hubs Program.*



We respectfully acknowledge the Country on which we learn, work, and gather, and recognise the deep enduring connection of the Traditional Custodians. CUC acknowledges the diversity and richness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures and pays respect to all Elders, past, present, and future. This land was, is and always will be Aboriginal land.

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A Message from the CEO

This plan did not begin in a boardroom. It began in the places where the work happens: in conversations with Centre Managers and their Boards across our 28 Centres, operating in 41 communities from Norfolk Island to the Tasmanian coast and through Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria.

What I heard in those conversations was consistent. Country people are already doing the work: studying between shifts, raising families while finishing degrees, building the workforce their communities need. What they ask of us is simple: the opportunity to access tertiary education within their community, the support and connections to succeed, and foundations built in our network to honour their ambition.

Every Centre was invited into this plan's development, and the response was extraordinary. These priorities were built with the people closest to students and

communities. That is how a federated network works, and how we will keep working: enabling, connecting, amplifying and protecting the value our Centres create.

Almost half our students are the first in their family to access tertiary learning, and the overwhelming majority of graduates stay in the communities they call home. Few interventions in Australian education return value to place so directly. Thousands of students across our Centres prove this every day. Our job is to make the structure behind them as strong as they are, and with this Strategic Plan 2026-2029 we commit to continuing to grow the impact of this investment into our communities.

Lou Conway
Chief Executive Officer,
Country UC Ltd
21st July, 2026

2013
CUC Snowy Monaro

2018
CUC Goulburn
CUC Far West

2019
CUC Clarence Valley
CUC North West
CUC Western Riverina

2020
CUC Parkes

2021
CUC Bass Coast
CUC Macleay Valley
CUC Maranoa
CUC Balonne
CUC Southern Shoalhaven

2022
CUC Ovens Murray

2023
CUC Cowra Region
CUC Cape York
CUC Mallee

2024
CUC Mudgee Region
CUC Mount Isa
CUC Southern Downs
CUC Western Downs
CUC RAPAD CWQ

2025
CUC Isaac
CUC Hughenden
CUC Hay
CUC Snowy Valleys
CUC Southern Grampians
CUC Eastern Tasmania
CUC Norfolk Island



Vision

A future where country people learn, grow, and build careers in their own communities and where that talent drives prosperity of regional, rural and remote Australia.





Our mission is to ensure that where you live never limits what you can become. We connect Country Universities Centres through shared learning and strong governance; build the systems and capability staff need to support every student; share our collective impact; and pursue the investment and recognition that learning in community delivers.

Mission



Our Strategic Priorities

01

Every Centre has the capability, governance and leadership to deliver with confidence

- Operational systems, data capability and governance
- Student support
- Professional development and Succession planning
- Affiliation Agreements

02

Funding grows to match the ambition within regional Australia

- Diversified and long-term funding
- Trusted partners
- Innovative models of service delivery



03

Our collective impact is visible, valued and heard

- An Impact Framework
 - Data, feedback and evaluation
 - Policy analysis and evidence-led advocacy
-

04

Governance and leadership that earns trust

- Transparency and accountability
- A team culture that reflects the communities it serves

How we work, together



Trusted
Governance



Collective
Storytelling



Efficient Systems
and Data



Connected
Relationships

“When country people can access education that’s genuinely fit for purpose, affordable, local, and on their own terms, they don’t just build their own future, they strengthen every part of the community they call home.”

- Alix Greenhill, Chair, Country UC Ltd



Our Values



**Integrity in
everything**



**Respect for
local knowledge**



**Place and
people matter**



Trust is earned

We exist to strengthen the network that brings tertiary education home to regional, rural and remote Australia.

For Centre Managers, Local Teams and Boards

We back Centre staff and Boards with practical systems, policy frameworks, professional development and a peer network that makes a demanding and important role feel well supported and well connected.

For Governments, Education Providers and Funders

The CUC is a trusted partner in regional service delivery. Our network of centres, thousands of active students, and community relationships offer both a proven model and a strong, collective evidence base. Investing in CUC means investing in flexible, affordable, place-based, and effective education participation.

For Country Students

We support Centres to provide a guided path into and through tertiary education with career advice, orientation, skills, peer connection, and local teams who know their students by name. Almost 50% of students are the first in their family to attend university, and 80% of graduates are likely to stay in the communities they call home.

For Regional, Rural, and Remote Communities

We support communities with a Centre to succeed and works alongside communities ready to grow one. Every CUC Centre strengthens the community it serves by creating pathways into tertiary education, building local workforce capability, and backing the people who choose to stay, return and invest in the places they call home.

For Industry Partners

Our Centres are where industry connection happens as they are the holders of local, trusted relationships and embedded in the communities they serve. We work across regions, states and nationally to attract industry partners who see the value of investing in regional talent. We focus on solutions in thin markets where essential workers are needed and traditional workforce solutions fall short. Alongside our Centres, we advocate with industry and Government to ensure regional workforce priorities are heard and acted on.



Value Flows From the Centres

At the heart of the CUC network are CUC Centres, students and communities, the place where everything that matters actually happens.

From local knowledge and place-based trust to student outcomes, community impact, grassroots innovation, industry connections and network expertise, the value generated by Centres flows outward from the communities they serve.

CUC Central's role is not to direct that value. The network has a responsive co-ordinating entity to enable, connect, amplify and protect the extraordinary work within community.

We enable by providing the shared infrastructure, systems and capability that allow every Centre to focus on what it does best, supporting students and strengthening communities.



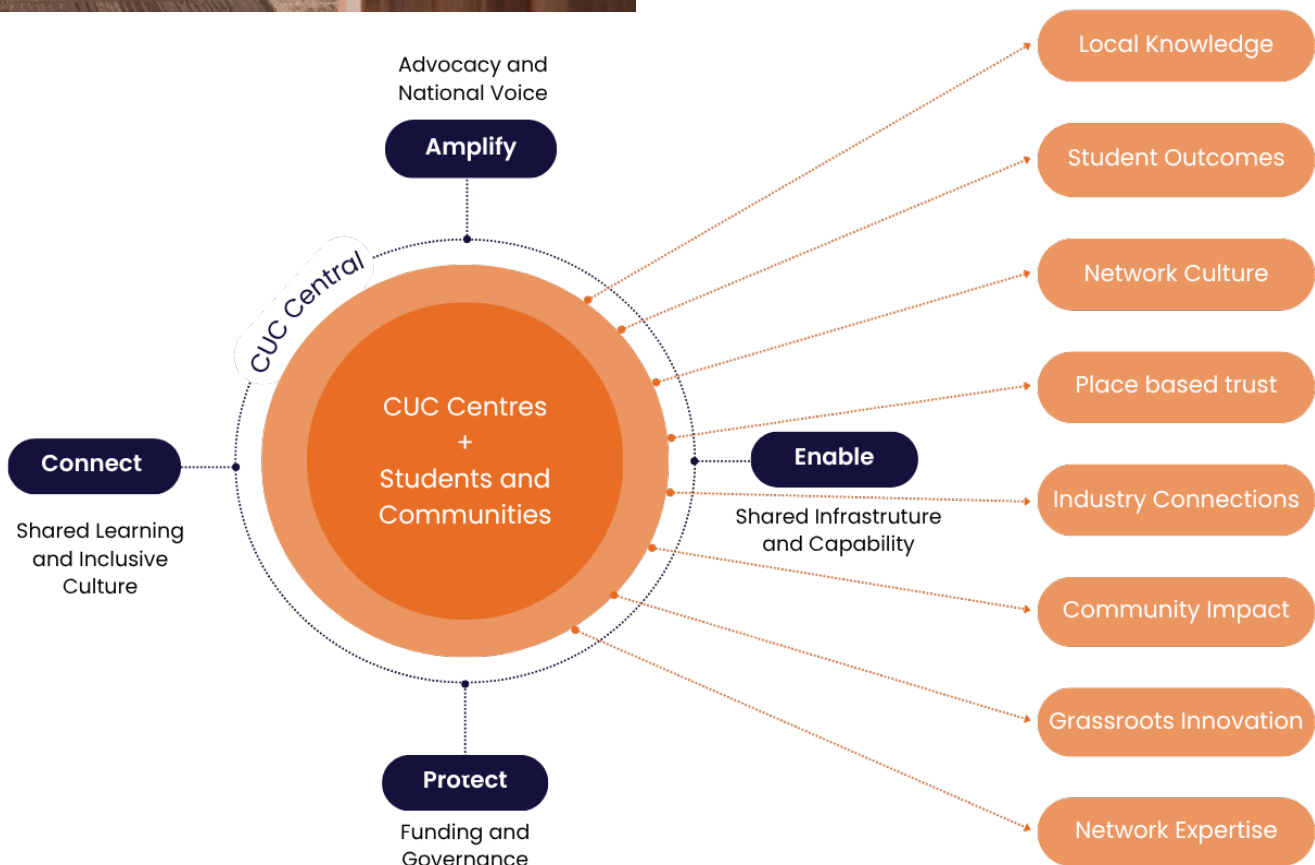
We connect by building the shared learning, network culture and inclusive practices that mean no Centre operates in isolation, because every insight, innovation and relationship strengthens the whole.

We amplify by turning the collective impact of CUC Centres into a national voice advocating for regional tertiary education at the policy level and ensuring the work of country communities is seen, valued and invested in.

We protect by securing the funding and governance foundations for Boards to plan, grow and serve their communities with confidence.



**CUC Centres
generate the value
by supporting
students,
building industry
connections
(work integrated
learning, industry
placements,
mentoring,
research projects),
and strengthening
communities.**





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