



Country
Universities
Centre
MOUNT ISA



ANNUAL REPORT

2024

We wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, the Kalkadoon people who have walked these lands, where our site is located, for generations.

We pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging.



Rigby Falls, QLD

“Our mission is to support students to succeed, widen access to higher education for regional, rural, and remote communities; and to change higher education to better fit regional Australia.”

CHRIS RONAN

CUC Chief Executive Officer



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



**Mayor Peta
MacRae**
Chair CUC Mount Isa Ltd

On behalf of the CUC Mount Isa board, I am honored to present this report reflecting on our journey towards establishing CUC Mount Isa. I am filled with immense pride for what we have accomplished together for our community.

I would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the federal government for its support under the Regional Universities Study Hubs program. I wish to express my appreciation to the previous Councillors of the Mount Isa City Council, who advocated for the funding of this project and saw the value in increasing educational opportunities for the local community. This initiative would not have been possible without the diligent efforts of the council and CUC central staff in securing our funding.

Special thanks go to my fellow board members—Pete Tuppurainen, Chris Pocock, and Chad King—for their unwavering support during what can only be described as challenging times, especially during the construction phase characterized by rising inflation and material shortages. I also want to recognize our initial centre manager, James Coghlan, whose short but impactful tenure was pivotal to our foundation.

I would like to acknowledge Cava Hydraulics & Engineering, particularly project manager Dave Kristensen, for their incredible flexibility and commitment to ensuring our project met federal grant requirements. Without their dedication, we would not be here today. The board and I are exceptionally proud of our current centre manager, Sean Bower. His leadership has been instrumental in establishing a nurturing environment that supports and mentors our students, thereby enhancing the centre's reputation in the community.

I want to extend my personal thanks to the CUC central staff for their invaluable assistance throughout this process. Without their support, the establishment of the centre would have been a far more difficult journey.

For other communities considering similar initiatives, I encourage you to pursue this path. Collaboration and local ownership are crucial, as exemplified by our centre, which is run by locals, for locals. We eagerly anticipate the day when we can unveil a graduate wall showcasing the achievements of our students.

In closing, I am thrilled to announce that MIM has come on board as a founding partner in our venture. This partnership will provide critical funding and support, especially vital for reskilling workers affected by the recent closure of their underground copper mine. Our community is fortunate to have such a commitment from MIM.

Thank you all for being part of this remarkable journey, and here's to fostering a brighter educational future for our local community.

Peta MacRae

CENTRE MANAGERS REPORT



Sean Bower

Centre Manager, CUC Mount Isa

Having celebrated the successful opening of CUC Mount Isa, the focus now is on the mission to increase aspirations and access to higher education in the Mount Isa Region.

The inaugural year of operations of CUC Mount Isa has been highly successful and rewarding. CUC has been warmly embraced by the Mount Isa Community as a facility for study, support, opportunity and connection.

At the time of writing this report, CUC Mount Isa has supported 83 local and placement students since the soft opening of services out of Mount Isa City Council Library in June 2024, with the Centre itself opening to students in August 2024.

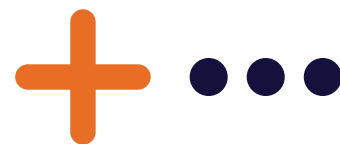
Our commitment to meeting students where they are, and evolving to the needs of our community as an innovative educational study space, is a vital component of this success. Partnerships are developing to provide innovative supports to meet local needs as evidenced by the uptake of Skills Generation offering of community service certifications, the number of placement students attracted by joint support of local service providers and CUC, and students forming their own study and support groups in the Centre.

Our students highly value the provision of a quiet place to study and also the opportunity to connect with other students from varied fields of study and backgrounds.

I am excited by the partnerships being formed and the programs currently in design to support students and the broader community of Mount Isa. It is my absolute privilege to work with our community towards developing greater synergy between education, careers discovery, and local employment to support the navigation of post-school and mid career transitions locally and beyond.

Sean Bower

OUR BOARD MEMBERS



Peta MacRae
Chair



PETE TUPPURAINEN
Board Member



CHRIS POCOCK
Board Member



CHAD KING
Board Member



ERIN MISKELLY
Board Member



OUR STORY

The Country Universities Centre's origins were in the establishment of the Cooma Universities Centre in 2013, designed to provide improved supported higher educational opportunities in that town of approximately 7,000 people.

WHAT WE DO

CUC Mount Isa is a dedicated learning and study space that supports any student, studying any course, at any Australian university or higher education provider. Students can connect with like-minded people and engage in a learning community while they study locally. We are focused on supporting the academic success of students and ensuring they have the tools to succeed in their higher education journey.

PARTNERSHIPS

Government & Community Partnerships

Essential to the success of the CUC has been the support of our partners, including the Commonwealth Government, university partners, local government and community partners.

The Australian Government

The Australian Government is investing more than \$74 million to assist in the establishment and operation of community-owned, Regional University Centres at sites across regional Australia. CUC is a successful recipient of the Commonwealth's Regional University Centres Program and gratefully acknowledges the support received to date.

Foundation for Regional Rural and Renewal (FRRR)

The FRRR is supporting the CUC through its not-for-profit fundraising account.

Mount Isa Mines – Foundation Partner CUC Mount Isa

Mount Isa Mines is supporting CUC Mount Isa through a Community Grant towards technology, decor and cultural art in the Centre.

PARTNERSHIPS

SKILLS GENERATION



BRINGING COMMUNITY SERVICE QUALIFICATIONS TO MOUNT ISA

Skills Generation (RTO) are utilising CUC Mount Isa facilities and student services for the delivery of certifications in Mount Isa under the DESBT Rural and Remote Pilot Program across four community-based qualifications.

Skills Generation's trainers Erik Dodwell and Tina Charles are working out of CUC Mount Isa as they provide face-to-face training and support, while also continuing to build networks in the community.

22 local Mount Isa students are currently working towards qualifications in support of greatly needed community services in Mount Isa.

The four qualifications provided are:

Certificate III in Community Services

Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing and Disability)

Certificate IV in Child, Youth and Family Intervention

Certificate IV in Mental Health



Students are encouraged to engage with qualifications knowing they have the facilities and support of CUC Mount Isa to give them every chance of success.

Erik Dodwell,
Skills Generation



PARTNERSHIPS

University Partnerships

The CUC has partnerships with the following universities:

Murtupuni Centre for Rural and Remote Health, JCU Mount Isa

CUC Mount Isa and Murtupuni have shared knowledge, resources and experience in support of local and placement students. Murtupuni have shared academic support opportunities and library resources with CUC students.

CQ University

The CUC and CQ University have a shared mission in supporting regional students to succeed, irrespective of where they live. The university has been a close partner of the CUC since its establishment and continues to provide expertise and support to students across the CUC network. CQUniversity are also an Outreach and Widening Participation partner with the CUC.

University of Technology Sydney (UTS)

UTS have partnered with the CUC to develop the Regional Partnerships Project Pool Program (RPPPP). This program brings together 19 universities and 16 Regional University Centres to design tailored school outreach programmes for the local community.

University of New England (UNE)

As Australia's oldest provider of distance and online education, the expertise of UNE has been highly valued by the CUC. Sharing of knowledge between UNE Support Staff, CUC Centre Managers and LSAs. UNE are also an Outreach and Widening Participation partner with the CUC.

LaTrobe University

A new strategic partnership between La Trobe and CUC will enhance support for rural higher education students choosing to stay in their local community. This partnership is a testament to the shared vision of improving low participation rates in higher education outside of metropolitan areas through a community-led approach.

Charles Sturt University (CSU)

In a collaboration between industry, community and university, the CUC works with CSU to provide connections between students and the university. CSU are also an Outreach and Widening Participation partner with the CUC.

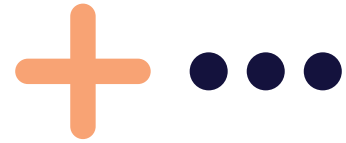
Federation University

This partnership provides the framework for future collaborations to share knowledge, expertise, and support students across the CUC network. Federation are also an Outreach and Widening Participation partner on the RPPPP.

The Granites, QLD



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



OUR COMMUNITY ARE OUR BIGGEST SUPPORTERS.

The Centre has engaged with local industry, schools, and organisations. The success of this Centre depends on the support from our local community.

Schools and Education

- Spinifex Senior College – designed Year 12 Art Gallery in CUC Project to be implemented 2025, parent and student events.
- Good Shepherd Christian College – Year 12 Mock Interview Day, parent and student events.
- Educational Precinct Mount Isa – established relationships in support of pathways to higher education.

Local Industry

- Mount Isa Mines – CUC Mount Isa Foundation Partner, providing community grant for technology, decor and cultural art.
- APA Group – providing community grant for art gallery infrastructure in support of Spinifex Year 12 Art Gallery Project.
- MEGT Jobs Expo – building awareness of opportunity to study and work in Mount Isa.

Local Services and Government

- Mount Isa LGA Workforce Alliance Working Group – developing partnerships and joint service initiatives.
- Local Service Providers including Murtupuni CRRH, NWRH, NWHHS, Headspace, State and Catholic Schools – supporting staff who are students, placement students and connections to students with employment aspirations in Mount Isa.

STUDENT SUPPORT

HERE FOR OUR STUDENTS

With the support of their local CUC regional, rural and remote students can follow their dreams when it comes to study. The CUC has responded to student needs and created an innovative model that allows choice by supporting any student, studying any course, at any Australian Tertiary Education Provider.

The wrap-around model of student support provides face-to-face academic, wellbeing, technology, administrative support in a learning community 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 responsibilities and multiple other commitments. The CUC offers a free, safe and welcoming environment to study with flexible and personalised face-to-face support. The CUC understand that students are individuals that need a variety of supports to meet their needs so that we meet students where they are in their education journey.

CUC Mount Isa looks forward to expanding student services as local needs are identified and programs are designed and staffed to meet those needs in 2025 and beyond.



STUDENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY 2024

KEY NATIONAL FINDINGS

97%

of students felt safe and welcomed at their CUC



94%

said the CUC helps improve their academic performance



88%

said the presence of a CUC contributed to their wellbeing



“Dedicated study space” was the main reason students attended their local CUC



96%

said the presence of a CUC makes it easier for me to stay, study or work in my community



I love having quiet spaces to come and study and also getting to meet other students. I am more excited to study now the CUC is in Mount Isa.

Susan, Bachelor of Public Health, Mount Isa



I enjoy sharing study space with other students.

Megan, Diploma of Project Management, Mount Isa



2024 CUC MOUNT ISA



79
students

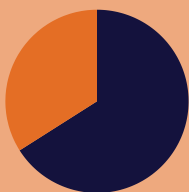


20
different
institutions



57%
are the first in
their family
to study

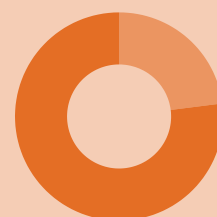
33%
study
full
time



67%
study
part
time

13 different
areas of
study

80%
female



20%
male

37%

Psychology,
social work &
Community
Services

29%

Health

8%

Education

TOP Areas of
Study





Name

Susan

Degree

**Bachelor of
Public Health**

Uni

**Central Queensland
University**

Lake Moondarra, QLD





Bringing degrees closer to regional, rural and remote Australia.

Proudly supported by



Australian Government

Department of Education



**MOUNT ISA
MINES**

A GLENCORE COMPANY