


ANNUAL REPORT

2021



Country
Universities
Centre
MARANO A



"The centre gives me the opportunity to focus on my studies. Without it, I doubt I would be able to finish my course."



2021 Annual Report

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Message from the Chair

Cameron O'Neil

On behalf of the Board of CUC Maranoa it gives me great pleasure to present the 2020–2021 Annual report. This report marks an important milestone for CUC Maranoa, and I couldn't be prouder of what our organisation has achieved in our first year.

Bridging the divide between urban and rural has never been more important and our goal of providing a first-class facility that gives 'real' choice to local students to undertake their studies locally is now being realised.



The last twelve months has seen the establishment of our new centre. From June of 2020, CUC Maranoa executed company registration, established our governance and board structure, recruited our fantastic Centre Manager Rebecca Coffey, identified CUC Maranoa's new home in the Maranoa Regional Council Bungil street precinct, undertook a renovation of the centre and made it fit for purpose and had the doors opened to students in March 2021 and officially opened by former Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack in June 2021.

Opening our centre has been a truly wonderful experience and is testament to the hard work and commitment that our Centre Manager Bec and my fellow Board Directors have shown in ensuring that CUC Maranoa became a reality.

I have championed the need to diversify our education sector in the Maranoa for the best part of the last decade and I am thrilled that the success of CUC Maranoa is simply measured by our registered students and their ability to undertake their higher education remotely from their hometown and region.

Recently CUC Maranoa welcomed our 100th student. This is a significant milestone in the history of our centre and one that we didn't think would be reached as quickly. CUC Maranoa has capacity to grow, and we look forward to being able to offer our facility to more students as we move into our second year of operation. The flexibility our centre offers in opening early and closing at midnight allows further choice for our students to study while maintaining employment.

The success of CUC Maranoa in our first year has been made possible by the support of our four key partners. Santos, Origin Energy, Powerlink and Maranoa Regional Council who

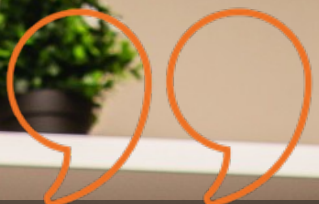
have illustrated their commitment by joining us as foundation partners and financially backing CUC Maranoa's establishment. Their support is truly appreciated, and we look forward to continued relationships as CUC Maranoa's continues to grow and deliver for our regional students.

The greatest asset CUC Maranoa has is our people. I want to thank the unwavering commitment of our Board of Directors; a diverse group of individuals who come together as a team to make CUC Maranoa the success it is and will continue to be for the communities of the Maranoa. Equally I want to express our thanks to Centre Manager Bec for the drive and passion she brings to the role. CUC Maranoa's achievements are because of the commitment you show each and every day.

CUC Maranoa has a lot to be proud of but there is more work to be done. I am honoured to be the Chair of CUC Maranoa and welcome the challenge of embedding our centre as a permanent asset for the next generation of students from the Maranoa.

Cr. Cameron O'Neil
Chair





"The CUC allows me to study in a way I wouldn't be able to and I think it has improved my grades."



Centre Managers Report

Bec Coffey

What an incredible first year of the CUC journey it has been! In November 2020, we found ourselves in desperate need of the perfect venue for the CUC. Thankfully in December we found it through the generosity of the Maranoa Regional Council allowing us to lease the Community Hub.

Over January, February, and March the hectic task of purpose fitting out the building was accomplished and on the 29th of March we excitedly opened our doors to students of the Maranoa. Later in June, we were privileged to have several distinguished guests celebrate our official opening with us.



I feel incredibly blessed every day to witness the delighted surprise of our new students as I tour them through our beautifully appointed centre. Every student has expressed their astonishment and gratitude that this new educational precinct is now available to them in their learning journey.

We have such a diverse group of students studying at the centre and it has been wonderful to get to know each of their educational journeys to date. Our students study through 29 different higher education providers, with health being our most common disciplinary area.

A lovely surprise in our student registrations has been the 25 students on placement who have keenly utilised the centre whilst they have been visiting Roma on their practical placements. Despite attending from multiple South-East Queensland university campuses, they have commented that we are the best study facility they have ever had access to.

At the time of writing this report, we have had over 1280 individual visits from our 106 registered students, during April to mid-October. Eventhough we now have over 100 students registered, there always seems to be free study spaces for students to access at any time throughout the day. Our building really is perfect for our requirements.

I would like to sincerely thank all our students for the respect they have shown to our beautiful facility and for letting me be a part of their learning pathway. Likewise,

the support from our incredible team across the network has allowed me to smoothly settle into my role, and the guidance, knowledge and time invested by our passionate Board of Directors has been invaluable to the success of the CUC to date.

As we find ourselves approaching the end of 2021, I am excited at what lies ahead for CUC Maranoa. By the end of the year, we will have an Administration Assistant come on board, which will allow me to have greater engagement with our local and surrounding communities.

At the beginning of 2022, we will have a Learning Skills Advisor also join our team. Our LSA will be wholly focused on providing dedicated support to each of our students. The mission of CUC Maranoa is not only to provide an exceptional study facility, but more importantly provide students with the support they need to succeed in their studies.

So, we will be hitting the ground running in January, with academic workshops being offered to our students as they prepare for a very successful year ahead in 2022.

Bec Coffey
Centre Manager





"Our best resources in regional communities are those individuals who want to upskill and study in their local community. The CUC is a model that's working and a model that we should be promoting, for the future, of our country communities. The CUC enables people to realise their potential, study wise, and then to contribute their efforts back into their communities by taking up the best jobs that are available."

Hon Michael McCormack
Former Deputy Prime Minister



"The success of CUC Maranoa in our first year has been made possible by the support of our four key partners. Santos, Origin Energy, Powerlink and Maranoa Regional Council who have illustrated their commitment by joining us as foundation partners and financially backing CUC Maranoa's establishment."

CUC Maranoa Chair
Cr. Cameron O'Neil

Our Story

Our History

CUC Maranoa proudly opened its doors to students on the 29th of March 2021. It was through the support of the Commonwealth Government and our local Foundation Sponsors of Santos, Origin, Powerlink QLD, and the Maranoa Regional Council that we could establish and present a world-class study centre to our local Maranoa Community. We were honoured to have former Deputy Prime Minister, Hon Michael McCormack, along with Federal Member for Maranoa, Hon David Littleproud, and Ann Leahy, Member for Warrego join our celebrations as CUC Maranoa was officially opened on the 8th of June 2021. In our first year of opening, we have supported 106 students in their learning journeys and we look forward to shaping the future of higher education in the Maranoa region in the years to come.

What we do

CUC Maranoa is a dedicated learning and study space where students can focus entirely on their studies. Students can connect with like-minded people and engage in a learning community while they study locally in the Maranoa region. We are focused on assisting students settle into study, improve their academic skills, and ensure they have the tools to succeed in their higher education journey.





"Studying at the CUC is amazing and I am most grateful for the opportunity it has provided to me"



Our Partners

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

Government and Community

The Australian Government

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



Australian Government
**Department of Education,
Skills and Employment**

Country Education Foundation

Country Education Foundation (CEF) and CUC collaborate to create and promote opportunities for regional students in areas of education, increasing aspirations, and community engagement.



Foundation for Regional Rural and Renewal (FRRR)

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



FRRR
Foundation for Rural
Regional Renewal

University Partners

The CUC has formal partnerships with the following universities to support current students studying at the CUC:

Central Queensland University (CQU)

The CUC and CQU have a shared mission in supporting regional students to succeed, irrespective of where they live, with the university providing place-based focused support for Bachelor of Education students who study at the CUC.

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 LSA's has provided a valuable resource for CUC students and developed an enhanced understanding of the challenges online regional students face.

Charles Sturt University (CSU)

In a collaboration between industry, community and university, the CUC is offering content specialised tutoring to assist CSU Bachelor of Nursing students registered with a CUC. The tutoring style is student-led, with students given the agency and flexibility to work with the tutor on the challenges they face in their personal learning.

Federation University

This partnership provides the framework for future collaborations to share knowledge, expertise and support students across the CUC network.

University of Southern Queensland (USQ)

The CUC and USQ have begun exploring ways to partner together to allow students to have broad access, choice and flexibility in their higher education pursuits.



Foundation Sponsorship Partners

CUC Maranoa is delighted to have an outstanding level of local support through our Foundation Sponsorship Partners. Each have provided \$20,000 in sponsorship for our establishing year.

Santos

Santos have not only provided us with a Foundation sponsorship level of support in 2021, but have confirmed an ongoing sponsorship arrangement for our first three years of operation, providing \$20,000 annually.

The Santos logo is displayed in a large, bold, blue serif font.

Origin

Origin have provided us with a Foundation sponsorship level of support in 2021. They have also kindly involved CUC Maranoa at their Information evenings and site visits for their apprentices/trainees.



Powerlink QLD

Powerlink QLD have provided us with a Foundation sponsorship level of support in 2021 and have taken a very keen interest in the success of the centre.



Maranoa Regional Council

Maranoa Regional Council have provided both financial and generous in-kind support during our establishing year. We are delighted to be leasing the perfect venue for the CUC in the Community Hub. During the months of our establishment, many MRC staff were vital in the support they provided to our team.





MARANOA

Your Future Starts Here

Country Universities Centre
MARANOA

Go Now & Make it Happen

LOS ANGELES

Proudly supported by

MARANOA

Our Non-Executive Directors

The unique talents and visions of each of our Non-Executive Directors, along with our Chair and Centre Manager, has been paramount to the success of establishing our incredible centre. As volunteers, we would like to extend a very special vote of thanks to our members of the board for their investment of time and energy in bringing CUC Maranoa to life.

Cr. Cameron O'Neil – Chair

Cameron has lived and worked across Western and South-Western Queensland for the past 15 years. He has a Bachelor Degree in Animal Studies from the University of Queensland.

As a local Councillor, Cameron has seen first-hand the importance of diversification and equity of access to education in rural, regional and remote Queensland, enabling people to have a real choice about where and how they study.

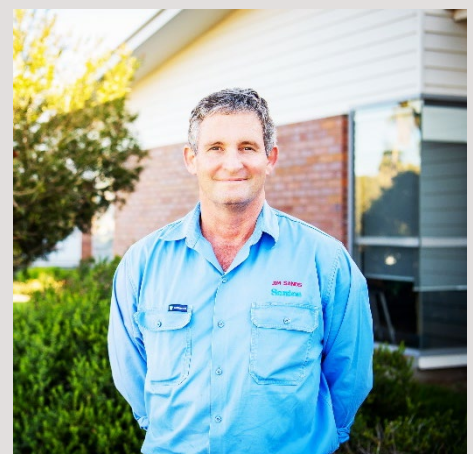


“CUC Maranoa is a game-changer for keeping our youth in our communities while also giving anyone, of any age, the opportunity to further their studies from the place they call home in a professional, purpose fit and technology-advanced Country Universities Centre. This is an exciting initiative for our region, and I am honoured to be playing a role in making it a reality.”

Jim Sands – Deputy Chair

Jim has 25yrs in Agricultural Education; firstly, as a Lecturer in Soil and Water Management at UGQ Gatton Campus for 19 years, and then as Campus Manager and Director of Internal Training for AACC Emerald Campus for 6 years.

Educationally, Jim has a Bachelor (Hons) in Applied Science – Rural Technology along with a PhD in Rural and Natural Systems Management. For the last 8 years, Jim has been based in Roma with Santos managing Agriculturally based operations for the GLNG project.



“My vision for the CUC Maranoa project is to provide assistance and support to students studying tertiary courses remotely in the Maranoa. This increases the options for residents

to upgrade qualifications and improves their chances of the completion success of their course.”

Camille Johnson

Camille has proudly lived in the Maranoa region her whole life. As well as having completed a Diploma of Management, Post Graduate Certificate in Business and a Certificate IV in Career Development, Camille has over ten years of board experience within the not-for-profit sector and nineteen years within the vocational education and training sector.

Camille is the Chief Executive Officer of Golden West Apprenticeships, and she brings a wealth of expertise and knowledge to the board.



“CUC Maranoa will offer the opportunity for people in the Maranoa to pursue higher education through providing the support for students to develop the skills and knowledge needed locally for the future sustainability of the region.”

Donaugh Shirley

Donaugh was born and raised on a property in South-East Queensland, attending All Hallows School and Griffith University, where she graduated as a teacher in 1977. Much to her surprise, she was transferred to North-West Queensland, which provided the pathway for her passion, into rural and regional education.

Teaching in Mount Isa, Cloncurry, and then Taroom, where she became a school principal, provided Donaugh with a wealth of experience around rural education. In her roles as the Foundation principal of Mary McKillop Highfields and principal of St John’s Roma, Donaugh has supported students, staff and the wider community in their acquisition and pathways to quality rural education.



“My belief is that all students, no matter what background, gender or age have the right to quality education. I see CUC Maranoa as a launchpad for many in our region to realise their full potential through education”

Ross Penrose

Ross is a local to the Maranoa district having grown up in Wallumbilla. After proudly attending Wallumbilla State School and Roma State High, Ross then attained a Bachelor of Applied Science (Physics) and a Diploma in Teaching.

Ross's teaching career began at Emerald State High School then at St Marys in Ipswich, followed by St John's School in Roma, where he still enjoys having a powerful impact on the students he teaches today.



"I believe it is so important for a community to retain some of the young adults that normally leave the district to continue their studies. They have so much to contribute to society and our region will be much better for it. The CUC will also provide valuable support for those people who have already committed to residing in the district and wish to continue studying. I am confident the CUC Maranoa will be a great asset for our community."

Judy Harland

In 1973 Judy completed her Bachelor of Arts at the University of Queensland, followed by her Diploma of Education. Between 1975 -1979 Judy enjoyed being a Secondary Teacher at Injune State School.

After this, Judy taught at Roma State School, and then between 1988 -1997, Judy was a Senior Secondary/Principal Teacher at the College of the South West. Following her extensive years as a Secondary teacher, Judy became the Director of Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE – Roma College.



"CUC Maranoa will provide an infrastructure base to support students in independent lifelong learning. In partnership with Universities, CUC Maranoa will offer rural-based students accessible, flexible learning opportunities which have a greater reliance on information technology."

Maxine Thomas

Max is a proud 5th generation Roma local being born, raised, and educated in the region. Max has an extensive list of educational achievements including a Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood), a Diploma of Agriculture, a Graduate Diploma of Agribusiness Management, and a Diploma of Training Systems (TAFE QLD).

After 21 years in the education and training fields, Max now works for Origin as a Stakeholder Liaison, and more recently as Origin's Early Talent Pipeline Student Chair.



"As a long-term local I am delighted to be on The Foundation Board of CUC Maranoa. The CUC will help to 'bridge the gap' for local residents completing tertiary studies through equity of access to services that urban students take for granted. With the support offered by CUC Maranoa, we'll have an increased opportunity to fill professional vacancies through local hire, continuing our investment in the growth, wellbeing and health of the local economy."

Bill Sheehan

Bill hails from Roma and has a diverse background in agriculture, agri-politics, and accounting. In 1972 Bill completed his Commerce Degree study at UQ. Bill then qualified as a Chartered Accountant in 1976 and spent five years with Coopers & Lybrand in Brisbane, Sydney, and Townsville.

Bill spent 18 months in practice with Statham Cheesman in Roma before embarking on twenty-five years developing his own broadacre livestock enterprises at Injune in Central Qld and Dirranbandi in Southern Qld.



Proudly, Bill has held senior executive positions in Queensland agri-politics including Maranoa Graziers President in 1990/91 and a United Graziers Association Councillor from 1987 to 1991, prior to the formation of Agforce.

He re-joined Statham Cheesman in 1995 and is now a managing partner. Other important accomplishments include being a member of the ICAA Qld Regional Council from 1998 to 2012 with being the 2010 Qld State Chairman, chairing the National ICAA Regional Australia Advisory Committee from 2004 to 2013, and was a member of the Federal Government's Agricultural Finance Forum from 1998 to 2013.

Our Team

Centre Manager

Bec Coffey

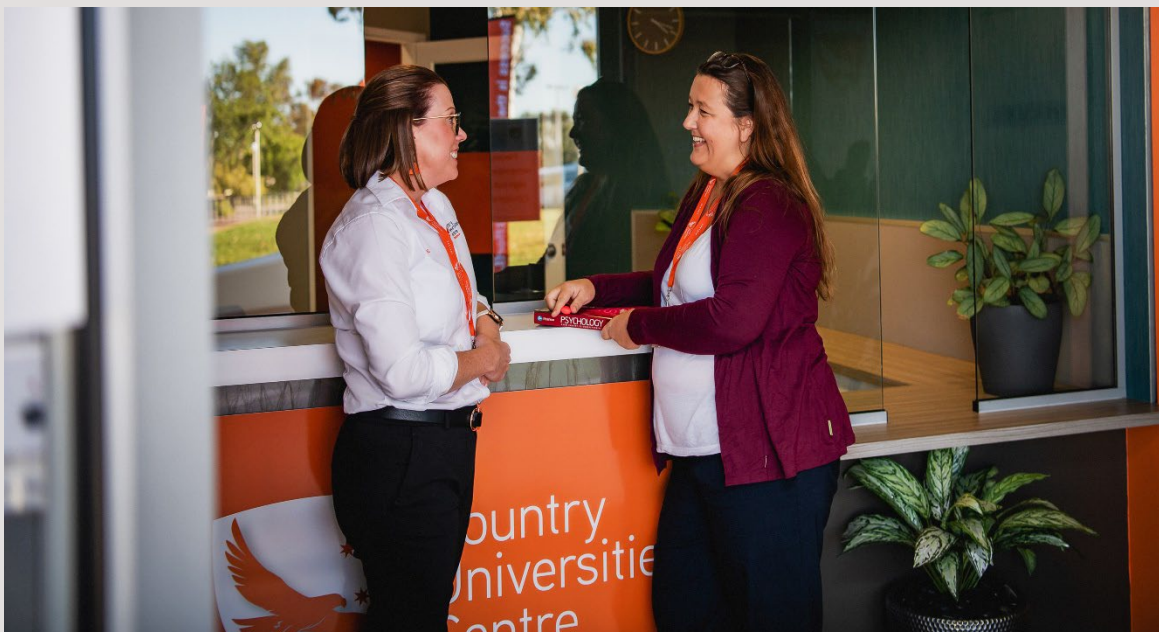
Bec comes to us with insight into what it feels like to be an external, mature age uni student, as she has spent the past 4 years studying her Bachelor of Secondary Education through USQ.


Before coming to Roma five years ago, Bec managed a 500,000-acre cattle property north of Cloncurry with her family. During the 10 years spent here, Bec experienced first-hand the difficulties in remote education access teaching her two children School of the Air and attempting multiple degrees.

Due to the poor access to the internet, it was since moving to Roma that Bec embarked on her goal of becoming a Secondary Maths teacher. While working through her studies, Bec shared her love of maths through tutoring many local students within the Roma region.

"I have absolutely loved studying later in life as I know who I am as a person and where my passions lie. The opportunity to help others, like myself, who strive to achieve a tertiary education without leaving the place they call home excites me greatly!"

"I have loved every minute of my CUC journey to date! Having the opportunity to set up such an empowering facility within our local community has been the most exciting career achievement of mine to date!"



A young woman with dark hair, wearing a black tank top and light blue jeans, is shown from the waist up. She is holding a large, light-colored tote bag with both hands. The tote bag features a red logo of a shield with three stars and the text "Country Universities Centre" in red. She is also holding a stack of books in her left hand. The background is a blurred orange and white wall with some text visible, including "ti" and "MAR A".

"The CUC has been incredible for my studies this last trimester. Before moving to Roma, I was living with my parents and had a full-time study load and was struggling to pass my units. I was so unenthusiastic about study and on the verge of deferring.

Now that I live in Roma, I am working full time and studying three units, amazingly, my marks have improved. I finish work, go to CUC, and do what I need to do. My motivation levels are so much higher having access to a study space that is separate from my day to day living area.

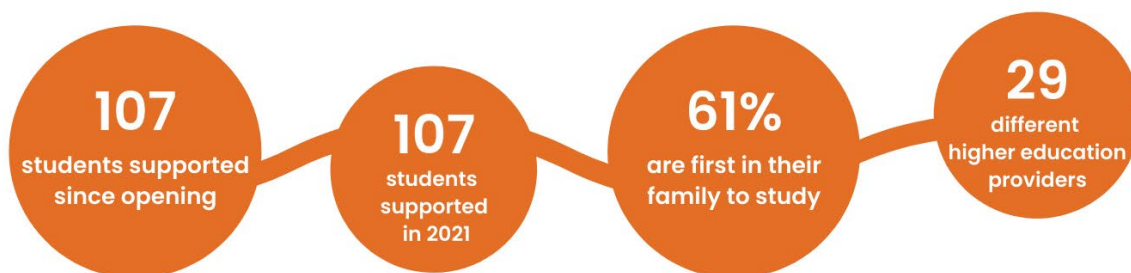
During exam times, having access to secure internet and a place that is set up to do exams relieved so much stress and apprehension. I've found myself actually enjoying studying."

Comment from Student survey

CUC Maranoa Students

We are ecstatic to have had over 100 students register in our first year of operation.

CUC Maranoa Fact Sheet 2021



77%
female



25%
male

59%
students are
under the age
of 25

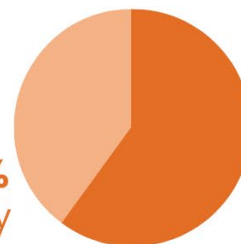


56%
study
full time



4%
Aboriginal and
Torres Strait
Islander heritage

44%
study
part time



Top Areas of Study



Health **44%**



Education **10%**

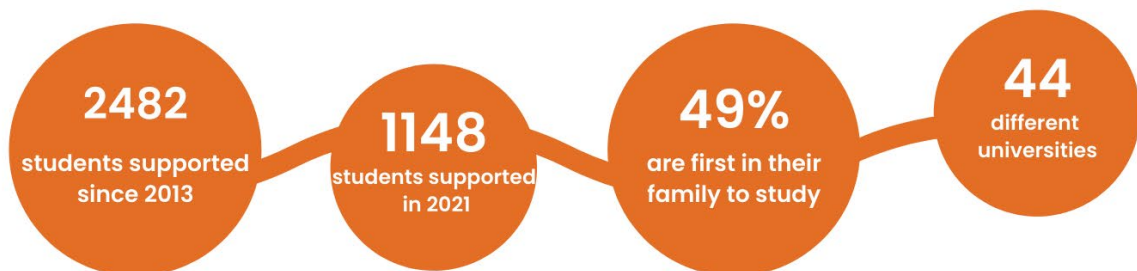


Psychology, Social Work &
Community Service **8%**

CUC Students

As a network we are proud to support such a diverse group of students in achieving their higher education.

CUC Network Fact Sheet Semester 1, 2021



78% female



22% male

55% students are over the age of 25

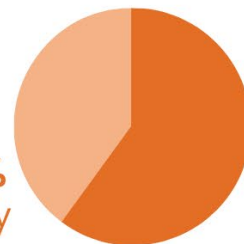


51% study full time



7% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage

49% study part time



Top Areas of Study



Health 26%



Education 16%



Psychology, Social Work & Community Service 10%

Student Support

CUC Maranoa provides wrap around support for any student who is studying at any Australian higher education provider and compliments the support that each student's provider already offers. This support includes access to a local learning community, in addition to well-being, administrative, and academic support.

Many CUC students are often the first in their family to attend university, are non-school leavers, have had a break from education, are balancing full-time work with study, have caring responsibilities, or a combination of these factors. These factors influence every student differently and can combine to create unique challenges for each student to succeed in higher education. To support these students, the CUC 'meets students where they are' and delivers face-to-face support that is tailored to the needs of each individual student.

The focus on face-to-face support provided by CUC staff is highly valued by Students. In the 2021 Student Experience Survey, 92% of students indicated they are more likely to continue with their studies because of the help they received from the CUC, while 87% of CUC students experienced a sense of belonging to the CUC, and 99% of students found the staff to be very or extremely helpful.



Having the opportunity to study at CUC has provided me with the right environment to assist me successfully getting through Semester 1 studies. Bec provides an outstanding service and support to Students.



Bec provides outstanding support to students, is happy and positive and keeps the facilities beautiful and clean. Studying at CUC is amazing, and I am most grateful for the opportunity it has provided to me.



Settling into study

Jan 2021



2021 Year in Review

Having the pleasure of designing and creating a centre that is as wonderful as any campus study space across Australia, has been an incredible accomplishment in our inaugural year. Everyone who tours or visits the centre is left surprised at the quality of the educational facility now available within the local community. To then have over 100 students register to use the CUC within our first twelve months of opening, reaffirms the importance of offering such a study space in our region.

CUC Maranoa Student Experience Survey

The CUC Student Experience Survey is a network-wide survey tool that is used to ensure the CUC remains agile and responsive to the ever-changing needs of students. The aim of the survey is to inform areas of improvement in service delivery and to document the impact the CUC has on students.

Highlights

100%

Of CUC Maranoa students
rate the cleanliness of the CUC
Centre as Excellent!

100%

Of CUC Maranoa students
rate the quality of technology in the
centre as Excellent or good!

100%

Of CUC Maranoa students
Feel safe in the centre!

100%

Of CUC Maranoa students
Found CUC staff helpful!

**“CUC is the best and without it, I very much doubt
that I would still be studying.”**



Celebrating our students



Anna Rowbotham
Bachelor of Agribusiness
UQ

The CUC opening was one of the driving factors to complete my final year of uni in Roma. While I'd studied from home a bit in the past, there was always something better to do outside and I found myself procrastinating quite often. Having access to a quiet place with a good internet connection has made it so much easier for me to get uni work done when I need to.



Georgina Rudken
Bachelor of Health (Honours)
USQ

The best thing about the CUC is getting to be a part of a student community again and not feeling so alone as an external uni student. As well as being able to access a safe, common place to study and participate in online course activities.



Jamie Whitney
Bachelor of Nursing
USQ

Having access to the facility, the multiple screens, and having somewhere to focus with an ADHD-brain, knowing that I'm here for a purpose, makes it so much easier to study.



“Studying from home is often a daunting and difficult task. CUC removes that constraint providing the resources and environment to succeed. In turn, I really believe this encourages students to take on study and pursue their higher education opportunities”

Graduate Student Story

Nick Whip

Bachelor of Agriculture/Bachelor of Business
UNE



Why did you choose your degree?

I am currently in my last trimester of a dual degree of Agriculture & Business at UNE. The major attraction to the degree was the balance between more hands-on practical application of the Ag degree with the business degree providing a basic understanding of economics and business cycles and viability of potential opportunities.

Describe your learning journey to date.

I started at UNE in 2018 residing at St Alberts College and the chance to live on campus was great. Since March last year with rolling lockdowns, Uni has been quite fluid with transitions from full on-campus to online study and back again a few times now. The back half of the degree has provided an opportunity to choose subjects which has been very interesting predominantly focused on economics of livestock production.

What challenges in your studies have you overcome?

With recent outbreaks in NSW, UNE has shut down with rolling lockdowns throughout NSW forcing border closures, I have relocated back home to finish my degree avoiding being stuck in NSW. While it wasn't the plan the CUC has made it much easier to study while Uni is online.

"The centre has provided a distraction-free environment to study that is certainly not the case at home with something always to be done. The facilities make studying online considerably easier with multiple screens and fast WIFI."

Community Engagement



Information stall at the local show.



Centre tours from the local high schools.



Aspire to health school program at the CUC.



Careers expo information stall.



Eric Nguyen

UQ Doctor of Medicine placement student



“CUC is by far the best study space we have ever come across and it just happened to be in Roma!”



Bringing
degrees
closer to
regional, rural
& remote
Australia

Proudly supported by



Australian Government
**Department of Education,
Skills and Employment**

Santos



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REGIONAL COUNCIL