



Country  
Universities  
Centre  
MARANO

2022

**ANNUAL  
REPORT**





CUC Maranoa provides a local study facility and dedicated support for our community to access higher education and grow opportunities for skilled employment

We wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, the Mandandanji people. We pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging.

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# Message from the Chair

Cameron O'Neil

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On behalf of the Board of the Country Universities Centre Maranoa, I am pleased to present our 2021/2022 annual report. This report showcases our achievements in delivering a real choice for students to undertake their studies locally. I am incredibly proud of our team at CUC Maranoa and what we continue to deliver for our community.



CUC Maranoa continues to grow as a new organisation. This year we expanded our team to three staff who support our students as they navigate their higher education, while ensuring the seamless running of our busy centre. Increasing our support to students was always planned in year two of operation, and with our student numbers reaching over 190 this year, it has been very much welcomed.

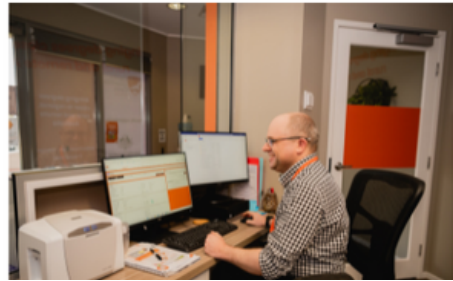
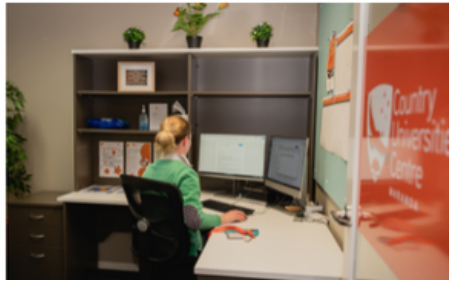
Bridging the divide between urban and rural and providing a first-class facility to offer real choice to students has, and always will be, the goal of CUC Maranoa. The reality of achieving this for our students and community is centred on the support of Government and business. The partnership with the Australian Government is essential to our success. As we move into our final year of funding under this current partnership, we will continue to showcase the positive outcomes that investing in our centre not only delivers to individual students but to regional communities as well.

Local business support and foundation sponsorship from Maranoa Regional Council, Santos, Origin Energy and Powerlink continue to strengthen our organisation and illustrate to the Government why delivering real choice for students in rural and regional communities to further their education can work towards sustaining regional Australia.

On a personal note, I want to express my thanks to the Directors of the Board of CUC Maranoa. The leadership, commitment and passion in driving and managing the business is why CUC Maranoa will continue for years ahead. I also wish to express my thanks to Centre Manager Bec Coffey, who along with Kat and Danny, continues to provide the highest level of support to the centre and students. Well done, your work is truly appreciated.

I am exceptionally proud of what we have built and delivered at CUC Maranoa. I am honoured to Chair our organisation and look forward to working with you all to secure its future.





# Centre Managers Report

Bec Coffey

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It is almost impossible to comprehend where the past 18 months have gone since our doors first opened. I feel incredibly blessed to be in the role of continuing to guide and take care of our local CUC here in Roma.

The continued growth of our student numbers has constantly astounded me. As we finish semester two supporting over 190 students, the need for and success of the centre speaks for itself.



Not only have our student numbers continued to climb, but I now feel that we have a strong presence embedded within the Maranoa community. We have formed wonderful connections with our local schools, TAFE, businesses and organisations. A settled feeling also resonates amongst our students, where the CUC is starting to feel a lot more like their second home, which is brilliant!

A key highlight of 2022 for me has been the addition of two amazing staff to the CUC team. Firstly, Kat coming onboard as our Learning Skills Advisor (LSA or Chief Support!) and the smiling face of Danny as our Centre Support Officer. I would be lost without you both!

We wouldn't be here, however, without all of our wonderfully dedicated students who continue to relish in the opportunity to study in our beautiful centre. We know how difficult the task of taking on study is, as it is often on top of an already busy schedule. We admire your dedication and hope that through your continued efforts and a little bit of support along the way, that you can achieve your study goals.

As we draw the year to a close, we wish all of our students success in their final pieces of assessment for semester two and we look forward to seeing our students in the centre who are studying over the Christmas break.

Thank you to everyone for making 2022 such an incredible year! We look forward to celebrating your successes soon at our end of year Graduation celebration!









# 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.

In 2017, the NSW Government invited the Cooma Universities Centre to develop a proposal to expand its model of higher educational support to further regions in NSW. By the end of 2019, eight Country Universities Centres had been established across NSW. Since then, the CUC has continued to expand with the support of the Australian Government's Regional University Centre Program and the NSW Government. In 2022, the CUC network has grown to include 13 Centres across Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria.

CUC Maranoa opened its doors in late March last year and since then has seen a remarkable growth in student numbers and students with many diverse areas of study.

## What we do

CUC Maranoa is a dedicated learning and study space that supports any student, studying any course, at any Australian university, TAFE or other learning institution. 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.







**Maggie**

**Bachelor of Education  
University of New  
England**

**"The CUC has made me feel very welcome and included as soon as I walked in. The facilities that are available for students are amazing. I am able to have a place to focus on study without any distractions. The help and support that is offered allows me to feel confident studying externally."**

# 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 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 keeping the CUC Maranoa going strong.

## Cr. Cameron O'Neil – Chair

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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.



## Jim Sands – Deputy Chair

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Jim has 25yrs in Agricultural Education; firstly, as a Lecturer in Soil and Water Management at UQ 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.



## Camille Johnson

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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.



## Donaugh Shirley

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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. Donaugh has taught in Mount Isa, Cloncurry, and then Taroom, where she became a school principal. 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.

## Ross Penrose

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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.



## Judy Harland

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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.



## Maxine Thomas

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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.

## Bill Sheehan

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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. He re-joined Statham Cheesman in 1995 and is now a managing partner.





# Our Centre Team

## Bec Coffey – Centre Manager

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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 seven years ago, Bec managed a 500,000-acre cattle property north of Cloncurry. 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. It was since moving to Roma that Bec embarked on her goal of becoming a Secondary Maths teacher.



## Katherine Ballon – Learning Support Advisor

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Kat was born and grew up in Roma, moving away for six years to complete her Secondary Schooling and Bachelor of Exercise Science and Graduate Diploma in Early Childhood Education. Having returned to assist in running her family cattle property and now raising a young family, Kat is passionate about supporting students to achieve their learning goals whilst remaining in Roma. With the experience studying on campus, as well as remotely online and on placement in rural areas, Kat can appreciate the benefits and challenges these study modes can present for rural students.

## Danny Tucker – Centre Support Officer

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Danny was also born in Roma and has lived in Roma all his life. Danny received an Electronics Technician apprenticeship straight out of school and then spent 25 years in the IT industry working for a local company.

As a former apprentice and having helped many other local apprentices and trainees through their TAFE training, Danny appreciates having a place like CUC Maranoa for those who live in remote communities to have access to the resources the CUC provides for their studies.



# Partners

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

## Government and Community



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Education**

### 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 Maranoa is a successful recipient of the Commonwealth's Regional University Centres Program and gratefully acknowledges the support received to date.



### 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.





# Partners

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## 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 – \$25,000 in sponsorship for our first two years of operation.



**Santos**

### 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.



### Powerlink QLD

Powerlink QLD have provided us with a Foundation sponsorship level of support in 2021 and 2022 and have taken a very keen interest in the success of the centre.



Operated by



### Origin

Origin have provided us with a Foundation sponsorship level of support in 2021 and 2022. They have also kindly involved CUC Maranoa at their Information evenings and site visits for their apprentices/trainees.



### Maranoa Regional Council

Maranoa Regional Council have provided both financial and generous in-kind support during our first two years. We are delighted to be leasing the perfect venue for the CUC in the Community Hub.

## University Partners

The CUC has formal partnerships with the following universities:

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

### CQUniversity

The CUC and CQUniversity 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.

### 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. In 2022, CSU expanded their partnership 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 25 universities and 16 Regional University Centres to design tailored school outreach programmes for the local community.

### Federation University

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

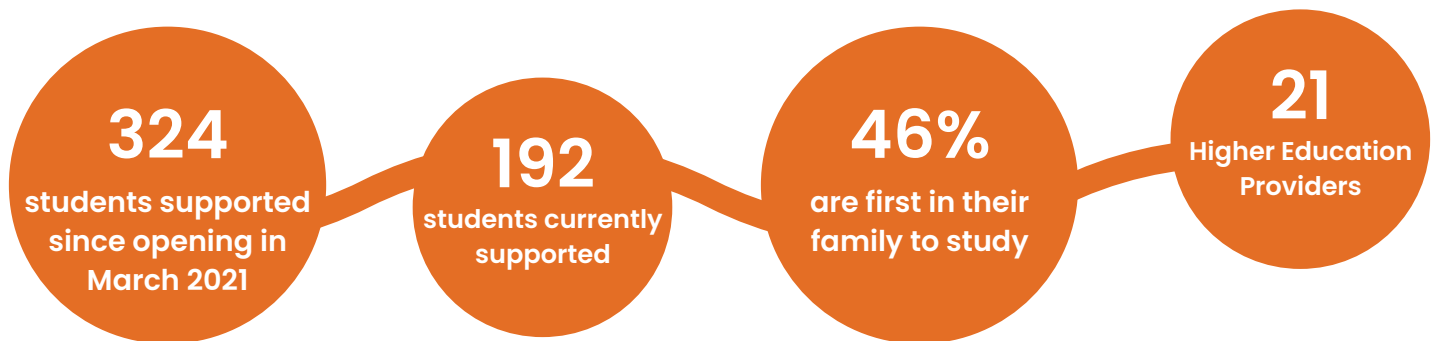
### University of Southern Queensland

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.



# CUC Maranoa Fact Sheet

## Semester 2, 2022



**87%**  
female



**45%**  
students are over  
the age of 25



**52%**  
study  
full time



**4%**  
Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait  
Islander heritage

**48%**  
study  
part time



### Top Areas of Study



Health **44%**



Education **19%**



Psychology, Social Work &  
Community Service **6%**

# Student Support

## Here for our students

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.

The focus on face-to-face support provided by CUC staff is highly valued by students. In the 2022 Student Experience Survey, 100% of students indicated they are more likely to continue with their studies because of the help they received from the CUC, while 92% of CUC students experienced a sense of belonging to the CUC, and 99% of students found the staff to be very or extremely helpful.

We are certain that all of our students would agree that all of our lovely staff are friendly and approachable, with nothing ever being too big a drama or problem to solve.

”

This place is AMAZING.  
I feel safe and supported. The perfect place to productively study all day.

”

The CUC is the best thing that happened in Roma. Studying in Roma before CUC is so different than after.



A portrait of a young woman with blonde hair, smiling, wearing a green jacket. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with a blue sky and warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise.

**Marnie**

**Bachelor of Agriculture/Bachelor of Business  
University of New England**

**"The Country University Centre has enabled me to connect with like-minded people and begin my career in the agricultural industry while studying externally. The amenities are great, it's a distraction free space and it's motivating to know that other people are doing the same thing. It is a million times more conducive to study than a bedroom or a kitchen table. Using the centre has made studying online a lot less an isolating experience. I am very grateful that this facility is in Roma."**

# 2022 Year in Review

A time for growth



We started the year with 68 students registered with us. We now have 192 Students registered with us

Our LSA Kat has joined us this year to help our students with their studies



During August, we had an average of over 18 students use the centre per day

We have had over 3,500 student visits so far this year



Danny, our new centre support officer has joined the team this year





# Highlights of 2022

**99%**

of students found the CUC  
staff extremely helpful

**100%**

of students said they feel  
more confident in their  
studies after getting help from  
Kat (our LSA)

**100%**

of students felt that using the  
CUC has meant that they are  
more likely to continue with  
their studies

**92%**

felt that they have  
experienced a strong sense of  
belonging to the CUC



# Celebrating our Students

## Our greatest achievements



**Brooke**

**Associate Degree of Business and Commerce  
University of Southern Queensland**

"We are so lucky to have a facility like this. The facilities are modern. The staff are great and always there to give you a hand. The workshops that they offer are informative and are directly relevant to your studies. It is really nice to meet people through different Uni's and listen to what they are studying. They organize a lot of social activities so everyone can get together. I would really recommend if you are studying to come in and use the centre."



**Chris**

**Doctor of Medicine  
Griffith University**

"The Country University Centre is a valuable resource. Finishing my degree with a rural rotation, it was reassuring to have the facilities, friendly staff and range of social activities which even the biggest metropolitan centre cannot compete with. An ideal facility for students where they can isolate from home and work life and concentrate solely on their academic goals."





**Trine**

**Bachelor of Accounting  
UNE**

"The CUC is a place I go to focus, a place where I am surrounded by other students. This gives me a sense of belonging. It's a place where I can have a chat with likeminded people, they may not be studying the same course as me, but they are going through the same things as me; balancing work, family, friends and a full-time study load.

I feel very privileged that I have been able to use the Centre since I commenced my Bachelor of Accounting in March 2021; I don't think I could have made it this far, without the support I have received from the CUC.

Bec has been an invaluable support to me, she was there when the computer froze during my very first exam, she has given me great support and advice when I needed it. Having someone to talk to and ask for help has made this study journey a lot less challenging and lonely.

The workshops provided by Kat are great, after attending her workshop on "Breaking Down Your Assessments" I got my very first HD for an essay assignment. I book one-on-one sessions with Kat at the beginning of my semesters, where she helps me create a study plan, that will keep on top of my study load. My goal is to attend all of Kat's different workshops, as I learn new skills each time I attend one.



# What our students feel about the CUC...

**"I am incredibly grateful for being able to access the CUC as my study haven!"**

**"Thanks to those involved, you have changed online university for regional students and we are so grateful!"**

**"Despite only being in Roma for a 6-week placement, it has been an invaluable place for study and managing other uni commitments. I am so impressed that Roma has this fantastic facility! It definitely boosts the 'rural experience' for visiting students!"**

**"CUC is an absolute gem of a place, the facility itself and the people in it. Bec and Kat, the other students etc. It is such a treat to have this incredible resource available to us. For me, especially that I am a mature age student and need all the support I can get!!**



# What our students feel about the CUC...

**"The staff members are very friendly and free print is great as I find ink cartridge unfordable. Thank you to all the sponsors!"**

**"The CUC provides a warm, friendly and quiet environment for me to concentrate on my studies. It has allowed me to balance work, family life and study commitments!"**

**"I know, 100%, that without the CUC being situated in Roma, I would not have attained the results I have if I studied and performed online "Zoom" from home. The assistance, surroundings and learning technology at Roma CUC are amazing."**

**"Keep up the good work! Rural Australia needed this place"**

# 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.**

## Discipline Specific Nights

CUC Maranoa hosted discipline-specific social nights for students who were studying in similar fields. It gave our students, both local and on placement, the chance to meet up with each other as well as meeting members of the community in the same industry.



## School Holiday Program

Our recent School holiday program was a fun-filled workshop for year 11 & 12 students to help prepare them for Uni. It was a wonderful day with a great group of local senior school students. The students learnt about what life at university would be like and how to prepare for it.



## Aspire to health School Program

We were pleased to yet again host the Aspire to Health program for our local Yr. 10 students. The students spent a fun day rotating around to workshops hosted by a number of different health professional to gain hands-on experience and to interact with the professionals they aspire to become.





# 2022 ALUMNI CUC MARANOVA

**Anna Rowbotham**

Bachelor of Agribusiness  
University of Queensland

**Jemma Hawker**

Bachelor of Agribusiness  
University of Queensland

**Nick Whip**

Bachelor of Agriculture and  
Business  
University of New England

**Aleena MacDonald**

Bachelor of Laws  
University of Southern  
Queensland

**Gina Nguyen**

Bachelor of Business  
Stotts College



# Bringing degrees closer to regional, rural and remote Australia.

Proudly supported by



Australian Government  
Department of Education



**maranoa**  
REGIONAL COUNCIL



**Santos**