



Country  
Universities  
Centre

SOUTHERN SHOALHAVEN

20  
23

ANNUAL REPORT

## **OUR VISION**

### **A vibrant place of learning**

Where people of the Southern Shoalhaven access tertiary education to enable lifelong learning that expands knowledge, changes lives and builds community.

## **OUR PURPOSE**

### **Bringing degrees closer**

Empowering local people and communities to succeed in education and realise their dreams.



### **Yaradban**

to soar/fly over

By Murramarang Yuin Artist Leanne Brook, 2021

Bundjanj dharanj bagandha Murramarang Yuwinjnggul

We remember we stand on Murramarang Yuin Country

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**WAYNE  
DEDDEN**

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to those who are once again supporting us, and for those joining us for the first time, in acknowledgement of another great year for CUC Southern Shoalhaven Ltd (CUCSS). FY23 has seen our Centre complete many milestones, including achievements against the initial 3-year Strategy Plan, and consolidating wins across the entire business. Achieving our purpose of ‘Bringing degrees closer by empowering our local people and communities to succeed in education to realise their dreams’ is not an easy task by any means, however it is very rewarding when it all works, 2023 has been one such year. Reaching this objective for CUCSS is primarily due to our hard-working Centre staff, the leadership and energy of Centre Manager Adam Gowen and the commitment, interest and intellect of our Board. The result has been a gratifying effort and well done everyone.

Congratulations to our student cohort who have chosen to be supported through our Centre activities over the past year. The Centre-user numbers exceeded the business-case projections from day one in our initial semester, and this year has been no different. One must only look at simple things like our social media updates to see the achievements of so many. This is underpinned by the evidentiary proof of Final Reports to our Grantors which reveal very positive KPIs. As part of our growth strategy over the past year we were able to expand face-to-face academic and well-being support thanks to Dr Brendan Riddick who joined our Team. The solid results and feedback speak for themselves. The stories emanating from our Centre are powerful reminders that the regional CUC model works to give local students of higher education access, equity and choice, so please keep sharing their stories.

Even after all the great achievements of the past few years there is still much to do, particularly in terms of future Centre sustainability. In August we revisited our Strategic Planning obligations which project us to 2027 with a continuing body of work. This will involve both the Centre staff and the Board working through our purpose on core business, and inclusive of valuable Programs and Corporate Partnerships. It was excellent to see that the Federal Government recently renewed its fiscal commitment in CUC Southern Shoalhaven Ltd (CUCSS) supporting our Centre for another three years. That commitment more broadly has also been evidenced in their recent indication to double the Regional Study Centre model numbers for communities in the forward estimates. Pleasingly, the NSW government has also indicated its forthcoming fiscal support of our Centre with details yet to be finalised. We acknowledge the good work of CUC Central’s Board in bringing the majority of that about. Additional to those arrangements the Centre continues to build upon the opportunity provided by the Hive Collaboration Space which is growing incrementally in support of bottom-line sustainability.

CUCSS’s governance and administration provides a level of confidence of which we should be quite proud. This year Gina Haddad and John Broughton joined our Director ranks, bringing additional professional skills to the Board. Our existing Directors continue to work diligently in many areas of the business, and I thank them all for their volunteer commitment and enthusiasm over the past year. The Board is enthused to further understand our opportunities as we gain more maturity around the Centre. We certainly think that 2024 will be another solid year of results for us all.



**ADAM  
GOWEN**

# REPORT CENTRE MANAGERS

Belong, Illuminate, Connect, and Grow these goals sit at the core of our mission. We see these goals come to life in our students and our focus on equity. The Achievements that we have seen materialise in 2023 reflect these core tenets. The year has been characterised by growth. We have grown numerically in both student registrations, student graduations, student support services offered and engaged with, and in our staffing numbers. We have also grown in our approaches to our establishing our vision and our understandings of the contexts in which our organisation exists. We have now supported well over 200 students from over 30 different higher and vocational education institutions.

The impact this has for our region is significant as we begin to see cohorts graduate from their studies and apply their newly minted skills to a range of applications in our local workforce and beyond. We wish the cohort of graduates from 2023 the very best as they set out or continue on their career pathways.

Throughout the year CUC Southern Shoalhaven has been an active participant in our community and an essential support for our diverse student cohort. We have been pleased to partner with a large number of community organisations and other partners to provide programs and services for our local community. Some highlights in this space of this include:

- The inaugural Community Careers and Education Showcase held at Ulladulla High School in partnership with Business Milton Ulladulla, Community Bank South Coast, Community Connect South Shoalhaven, TAFE NSW Ulladulla, and Ulladulla High School.
- Future Me Program delivered in our Centre in partnership with the University of Wollongong, giving year 12 students some valuable insight into university life and the admissions process.
- University of Canberra school holiday program, providing fun and educational learning opportunities to children of registered students from all universities while they were given an opportunity to use the Centre to progress their studies.
- CUCSS NAIDOC morning tea event well attended by our local community celebrating the 'For our Elders' theme as well as the success of a number of First Nations students.

In 2023, the Federal Government's renewed commitment to our Centre saw funding secured until 2027. Additionally, program funding has been allocated for the rollout of the Widening Participation Program as part of the Eastern Australian Regional University Centre Program (EARUCP), commencing in 2024.

A huge thankyou to all the people who make our organisation the success it is. The CUCSS Board, and staff, the students, our local community, CUC Central team, and institutional partners. We look forward to another year of great success, shared in community.

# PARTNERSHIPS

## GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

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

### NSW GOVERNMENT

The NSW Government has supported the CUC through multiple funding grants exceeding \$16 million, which facilitated its successful expansion. The NSW Government's Higher Education Strategy focuses on increasing participation in higher education, CUC is proud to assist the government to achieve this by supporting people in our region to pursue higher education in their local community.

### 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.

### 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.

# PARTNERSHIPS

## UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

**The CUC has formal partnerships with the following universities:**

### 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 has provided a valuable resource for CUC students and developed an enhanced understanding of the challenges online regional students face. UNE are also an Outreach and Widening Participation partner with the CUC.

### CQ UNIVERSITY

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. CQUniversity are also an Outreach and Widening Participation partner with the CUC.

### 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

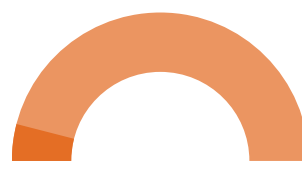
This partnership provides the framework for future collaborations to share knowledge, expertise, and support students across the CUC network. Federation are also an Outreach and Widening Participation partner on the RPPPP.

# SNAPSHOT OF 2023

## 125 STUDENTS



**40%**  
are the first in  
their family  
to study

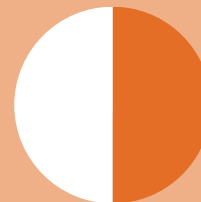


**14%**  
of students  
identify as  
Indigenous



**30**  
UNIVERSITIES  
& NUHEPS

**48%**  
study  
full  
time



**52%**  
study  
part  
time

## TOP AREAS OF STUDY

**23%**

Education

**19%**

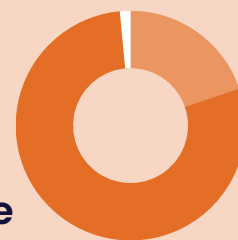
Psychology,  
social work &  
Community  
Services

**18%**

Health

**25** Students  
graduated

**81%**  
female



**19%**  
male



# STUDENT SUCCESS

”

*I was so happy to have the CUC for my final year. It made such a difference to my outcomes and made it easier to complete my Degree. Being surrounded by similar people and having study friends to support you is quite central to success*

*Kiara  
Bachelor of Arts*

”

*The accessibility and being a part of an active community of students has been the central role of the CUC for me. Being on a journey with like-minded others even if they have different goals.*

*Jordan  
Bachelor of Business*

”

*The Centre has saved me! It has been so central to successful outcomes for me. Having a business and being a single parent makes pursuing higher education almost unachievable but having somewhere to go and focus purely on what I needed to changed everything.*

*Kirilly  
Master of Teaching (Secondary)*

”

*I honestly don't know if I could have completed my study without the CUC. It is the reason I succeeded and have the job I do. The technology had an enormous impact on my efficiency and ability to multi-task which is important when you have limited time"*

*Kate  
Master of Regional and  
Urban Planning*



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**AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION  
TO THE DIRECTORS OF  
CUC SOUTHERN SHOALHAVEN LTD  
A.B.N. 33 637 981 947**

3<sup>rd</sup> October 2023

Declaration of Independence by Mark Burcher to the Directors of CUC Southern Shoalhaven Ltd

In accordance with the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and the Corporations Act 2001. I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, during the year ended 30 June 2023 there has been no contraventions:

- i) Of the auditor independence requirements set out in the Australian Charities and Not-for profits Commission Act 2012 and the Corporations act 2001 in relation to the audit; and
- ii) Of any applicable codes of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

**Mark Burcher**

Office 1, 134 Princes Highway

Ulladulla NSW 2539

Dated: 03/10/2023

Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation.  
Any advice given is taxation advice only and is not and should not be taken as financial or legal advice.  
If you require these services we would be pleased to put you in contact with the relevant professional.

Ulladulla • Batemans Bay • Moruya • Sydney

**Mark D Burcher**  
F.C.A. B.Com. JP  
Director

**John C Nevin**  
CA, B.Bus (Acc/Mkt),  
Grad Dip(ICAA),  
Dip FP, JP  
Director

**Carl Roklitzer**  
B.Com(Acc)  
Dip FP  
Director

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# Auditor's Report

## CUC SOUTHERN SHOALHAVEN LTD For the year ended 30 June 2023

### Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of CUC SOUTHERN SHOALHAVEN LTD (the company), which comprises the assets and liabilities statement as at 30 June 2023, the income and expenditure statement for the year then ended, cash flow statement, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the certification by directors.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of CUC SOUTHERN SHOALHAVEN LTD, is in accordance with *Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not for profits Commission Act 2012*; including:

(i) Giving a true and fair view of the registered entity's financial position as at 30 June 2023 and of its financial performance for the year then ended:

(ii) Comply with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1 and *Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not - for Profit Commission regulation 2013.*

### Basis For Opinion

We have conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the association's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report, in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the association's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the committee, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

### Director's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The Board of Directors of CUC SOUTHERN SHOALHAVEN LTD are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report, and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 is appropriate to meet the requirements of the ACNC Act and the Company's constitution. The directors' responsibility also includes such internal control as the board determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.



John Nevin

Office 1, 134 Princes Highway, Ulladulla, NSW, 2539

Dated: 03/10/2023

# COUNTRY UNIVERSITIES CENTRE

Southern Shoalhaven

[cucsouthernshoalhaven.edu.au](http://cucsouthernshoalhaven.edu.au)

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

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**Department of Education**

