



Country
Universities
Centre

CAPE YORK

ANNUAL REPORT

20 23

A scenic sunset over a body of water, likely a bay or harbor. The sun is a bright, glowing orb in the center of the horizon, casting a warm, orange and yellow light across the sky and water. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds. In the background, a range of mountains is visible under the sunset sky. The water in the foreground is calm, reflecting the warm light. Several sailboats are anchored in the water, their masts and sails visible. The foreground is framed by the dark, silhouetted tops of trees and foliage.

**Our mission is to provide regional people
with the space and tools they need to
create a vibrant and more prosperous
future for themselves and their wider
community.**

We wish to acknowledge that our centre is located on Guugu Yimithirr Country. We pay our respects to the Guugu Yimithirr, Kuku Yalanji, Kuku Nyungul and Jalunji people, the Traditional Owners and custodians of our region in far north Queensland. We extend this respect to their Elders past and present as well as our emerging leaders.

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

**MARILYN
MORRIS**

THE CUC CENTRE IS CHANGING LIVES AND GIVING SO MANY OPTIONS TO KEEP PEOPLE IN THEIR OWN BACK YARD STUDYING AND LEARNING AND ACHIEVING.



I have watched the formation of CUC Cape York over the past year and I am very grateful to have been a part of this important endeavour. Having lived in remote communities for most of my life, I understand the importance of having access to good educational facilities and thank the Federal government for its foresight in providing funding for a study hub in a small, remote community like Cooktown.

The impact the CUC is having in the lives of people in our region is outstanding and I am excited to see where the next year of operation takes us. Already we have seen school age students and those close to retirement age accessing the facilities and services provided with great results.

As a first-time Chair, the role has definitely come with its challenges, but I have received great support from the staff, fellow board members and the CUC network which I am thankful for. We are all on a learning journey together and working some things out as we go along, which is the exciting but the sometimes-nerve-wracking part of developing a new venture.

Many years ago, my parents actually ran the old TAB in the building that is now CUC Cape York. Funnily enough, it was also an important gathering place at the time where people came together for a common interest. You can imagine that standing on the steps of the new CUC Cape York cutting the ribbon on the day of it's official opening with my Mum watching on was rather special for me.

It is terrific to see the staff getting out and about in the community and I am thrilled with the engagement in community events including the Laura Quinkan Indigenous Dance Festival and Bloomfield Bazaar, both of which I was able to attend and enjoy. It has also been wonderful to host events in the centre and see the reactions of first-time visitors who are always surprised at how much there is and how welcoming it feels.

The outlook for Cape York Peninsula is looking bright with the CUC providing opportunities for our young people to stay on country to complete their studies if they choose to. I look forward to 2024 and the great things to come.

CENTRE MANAGERS REPORT

JENNI
JAMES

**THE CAPE YORK COUNTRY
UNIVERSITIES CENTRE IS A
SIGNIFICANT STEP FORWARD
FOR THE REGION AND WILL
PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH
VALUABLE SUPPORT AND
RESOURCES TO HELP THEM
ACHIEVE THEIR ACCADEMIC
GOALS.**



I am delighted to have undertaken the incredible journey of bringing Country Universities Centre Cape York CUC CY to life over the past year. From initial discussions in 2022 to opening our doors to our first students in April 2023 to now being recognised by the community as the preferred place to study. The story of CUC CY has evolved quickly and this inaugural annual report has been designed to showcase our first year as a non-profit organisation from October 2022-2023.

I would like to personally thank all of the people involved in the capital works that have made our beautiful centre what it is today. Along with project management support from Cook Shire Council, several local and regional trades and suppliers worked to tight timelines to achieve a welcoming, comfortable and practical space.

Over the course of 2023 we have seen more than 50 students register with us and this number continues to grow every week. This is well in excess of our second year targets and we already have students registering their interest who are commencing their studies in 2024. Usage of the centre is also growing, reaching 75% capacity on several occasions.

We are happy to have been able to assist students from a diverse range of backgrounds and a diverse spectrum of courses ranging from Year 10 students to TAFE certificates to Bachelors and Masters degrees as well as two PHD students. We also have some students undertaking non-accredited courses and have delivered several community training sessions and networking events. These are discussed further throughout this report.

I am thrilled to have Indigenous Engagement Coordinator, Tiannie Otto join the team and look forward to welcoming our Student Support and Outreach Coordinator to the team in the new year. The focus for 2024 will be outreach to schools and neighbouring communities to increase our impact in the wider region.



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 Cape York is a dedicated learning and study space that supports any student, studying any course, at any university, TAFE or learning 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.



Simone

Cert III in Business
Administration
TAFE Queensland

PARTNERSHIPS

GOVERNMENT AND 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.

- **COOK SHIRE COUNCIL**
Council was instrumental in gaining the much needed funding from the Commonwealth Government and then helping to project manage the establishment of CUC Cape York. As a founding partner Council has also agreed to provide \$20,000 sponsorship a year for three years until 2025.
- **FOUNDATION FOR REGIONAL RURAL AND RENEWAL (FRRR)**
The FRRR is supporting the CUC through its not-for-profit fundraising account.
- **THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT**
The Australian Government is investing millions to assist in the establishment and operation of community-owned, Regional University University Study Hubs at sites across regional Australia. CUC Cape York is a successful recipient of the Commonwealth's Regional University Centres Program and gratefully acknowledges the support received to date.

UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

The CUC has partnerships with the following universities:

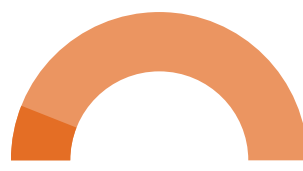
- **UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY (UTS)**
UTS have partnered with the CUC to develop the Regional Partnerships Project Pool Program (RPPPP). This program brings together 19 universities and 16 Regional University Centres to design tailored school outreach programmes for the local community.
- **JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY (JCU)**
The CUC and JCU are working together to form a partnership to support outreach in remote communities. CUC Cape York also supports JCU medical placement students studying medicine including nursing students and doctors.
- **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.

SNAPSHOT OF 2023

57 STUDENTS



59%
are the first in
their family
to study



12%
of students
identify as
Indigenous



23
different
institutions

37%
study
full
time



63%
study
part
time

TOP AREAS OF STUDY

32%

Health

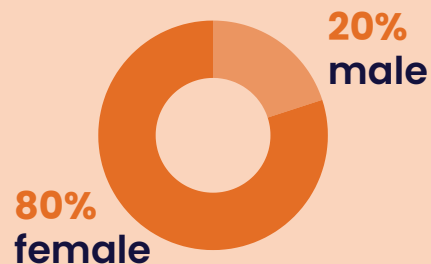
14%

Business &
Management

9%

Psychology,
social work &
Community
Services

13 different
areas of
study





2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

A TIME FOR GROWTH

- Year ending Dec 2022**
Initial meetings with LQAQ and CUC. Grant application and signed conditions of grant. Formation of CUC Cape York as a non-profit organisation. Appointment of Centre Manager and preliminary capital works.
- January 2023**
Centre Manager commences working.
- March 2023**
Construction of the building complete. This included creating office spaces and the kitchen and bathroom in the existing space.
- April 2023**
Furniture and technology fit out complete. First Board meeting.
- May 2023**
Printer/scanner installed. Soft opening of centre with a community open day.
- July 2023**
CUC Cape York was officially opened on 10 July by Assistant Minister for Education, The Hon. Anthony Chisholm and Federal Member for Leichhardt The Hon. Warren Entsch.
- October 2023**
Total of 55 students registered - exceeding second year registration expectations.

Karen Furst
Foundation Certificate
in Hypnotherapy
*Institute of Clinical
Hypnotherapy and
Psycho Therapy*



OUR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENTS

Jennifer Ribarich Diploma of Human Resource Management Upskilled

Completing my Diploma was a huge undertaking, and I couldn't have done it without the amazing facilities and staff at the CUC. Juggling a full-time job and caring for four children made pursuing higher education from home challenging, but the ability to walk into a dedicated study zone gave me the essential support I needed. The centre's comfortable learning environment and facilities has equipped me with the skills necessary for a rewarding career in Human Resources. A big thank you to Jenni and the team, I truly believe I couldn't have reached this milestone without CUC Cape York.



Pearl Modric Bachelor of Nursing Science James Cook University

My final two months of nursing placement, in a remote location, with no pay, working long hours and coming home to 6 students in a dorm style communal house presented focus challenges and barriers to success. CUC provided a tremendous, supportive space and tools to empower my potential to succeed, crucial to complete my Bachelor of Nursing Science Degree. CUC and Centre Manager, Jenni James opened the door to an incredible supportive safe learning environment. The location and layout of CUC is easily accessible, user friendly with all amenities, nurturing accumulating factors through studying. Thanks Jenni James and CUC, I truly could not have got through those last assignments without you.





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

OUR COMMUNITY ARE OUR BIGGEST SUPPORTERS

Community Engagement Highlights

The board chair and staff attended Laura Quinkan Indigenous Dance Festival to promote CUC Cape York to the wider Cape York Peninsula community. There was lots of interest in the new centre from both community and visiting academics.

A trade stand was set up at the Bloomfield Bazaar agriculture and cultural show to provide information and promote CUC.

School Engagement Highlights

School principles were invited to view the centre during its construction to see the progress and discuss how it can support students. After discussions with the board it was decided that Year 10 and above students can access the centre during office hours.

Staff also attended careers expos in Weipa, Hope Vale and Cooktown during 2023.

Industry Engagement Highlights

CUC Cape York hosted several events year including a small business morning tea in conjunction with Cook Shire Council and Cooktown Chamber of Commerce and Tourism. Several AI events were also hosted in the centre in conjunction with Cooktown Chamber of Commerce and Tourism.



Bringing degrees closer to regional, rural and remote Australia.

**COUNTRY UNIVERSITIES CENTRE
Cape York**

www.euccapeyork.edu.au

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Australian Government
Department of Education



Cook Shire
COUNCIL