

2022

ANNUAL  
REPORT



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 acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Ngarigo Land.

We acknowledge the waterways, the land, the sky and all who inhabit this place, Country.

We acknowledge their ancestors, the Elders and recognise those who continue to protect and promote Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander culture.

We acknowledge the past and stand together for our future.

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# Message from the Chair

## Carolyn Ewart

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Our centre is in its ninth year and proudly the inaugural centre. As I reflect on 2022, I see a centre that has emerged post pandemic that continues to strongly live by our mantra “where you live should not dictate your education”. This will always remain at the foundation of Country Universities Centre Snowy Monaro (CUCSM).

It is with great pride that I present my Chairs report for 2022.

The CUC model continues to inhabit an educational space for regional, rural and remote NSW that nine years ago did not exist. In filling this space locally our CUCSM is providing opportunity for our students to succeed, equity in regional education, supporting regional growth and consequently strengthening our community.

It is wonderful to see the centre full of students again as we emerge post pandemic to find a new world of educational thinking. The concept of remote learning is now more widely understood through learnings discovered courtesy of Covid-19.

### Federal Funding

We are very excited that CUCSM is a successful recipient of the Commonwealth's Regional University Centres Program and has attracted Federal funding of \$1,047,081 over four years. We are very grateful and acknowledge the support and investment in regional tertiary education. This operational funding will be used to update our technology so we can continue to offer state of the art technology and connectivity, refurbish our centre and provide funds to continue to offer our students top shelf academic face-to-face support. Data tells us that the focus on face-to-face support provided by CUC staff is highly valued by students, 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.

### Vincent Fairfax Foundation

We thank the Vincent Fairfax Foundation for providing funding for our centre alongside CUCSM funds, in employing a Learning Skills Advisor, Dr Viveka Hocking for the past 3 years. This grant has concluded but the essential role of academic support was reinforced as students reported in their feedback the exceptional benefits achieved providing better learning outcomes for students translating to excellent results and personal success. This role will be expanded using different funding in 2023 to include more face-to-face engagement

# Message from the Chair

## Carolyn Ewart

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### Our centre

As we look down the barrel to our ten years celebration in March next year, our focus on student success, wellbeing, regional business and community growth is still number one.

This year our enrolment numbers have been 189 students over two semesters with the top three areas of study being Health, Education and The Arts. We had students studying at 34 different education providers choosing wide and diverse course content. Women still remain our highest participants at 79% and men have increased slightly with 21%. 30% of our students are first in family with 6% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage.

### Uni4life

The Uni4life program run by University of Canberra has continued to be a feature every school holidays in our centre, providing a space for children to explore learning while their parents are able to continue their studies in the next room. The benefits of this program are proving to be a life saver for many parents to enable them to continue studying and modelling good learning practice for the kids in a fun, stimulating and innovative way.

### Regional Partnerships Project Pool Program (RPPP)

The Eastern Australia Regional University Centre Partnership is a collaboration of 25 universities and 16 Regional University Centres across Queensland, NSW, ACT and Victoria led by the CUC and the University of Technology Sydney (UTS).

The Project will utilise the Commonwealth funding to work on a coordinated, community-led approach to widening university participation and school outreach, partnering with local communities to co-design innovative programs that address their unique community challenges in nurturing local aspiration and supporting access to higher education.

CUC Snowy Monaro and University of Canberra aim to develop a program that will change the narrative of regional student access, participation and success in higher education. This project will address the ingrained misperceptions regarding commencing and completing university study by Cooma community members. Working closely with schools, students, parents/carers, mature aged persons and key influencers, the project will increase awareness of non-traditional pathways to higher education through authentic relationships and programs co-designed by the community, CUC Snowy Monaro and University of Canberra.

# Message from the Chair

## Carolyn Ewart

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### NSW Government funding

We are very fortunate that we are now included in the funding agreement between CUC Central and the NSW Department of Education to secure a NSW Government grant from September 2022 to June 2023 for operational running costs. We wish to thank the NSW Government for their support of regional tertiary education and CUC Central for their work on behalf of the CUC network.

### Strategic Planning

CUCSM will be turning 10 in 2023 and is currently in a transitional stage, as the oldest centre in the network the board is very mindful to maintain currency and check direction as we transition into our next decade. CUCSM is currently going through a process to review, update and work on a new strategic plan that will see us into the next 3 years operationally and 5 years visionary. We have enlisted objective guidance of Lyla Rogan to ensure we maintain excellence for our students and community going forward.

In closing, I wish to thank our Centre Manager, Nadine Holland for so competently steering the CUCSM ship, her kindness and wonderful support shown to our students and her ability to make our Centre feel like home. Thank you to our LSA Dr Viveka Hocking for making a difference in the lives of our students.

I wish to thank CUC Central for the body of work achieved to support the growth of development within our network and thank the team for continually working with us to ensure the best possible outcomes are achieved for our students.

I also wish to thank the Snowy Monaro Regional Council for their continued investment in community by providing the opportunity for regional tertiary education, never losing sight of our local regional community needs.

Most importantly I wish to thank the Board – Frances Robinson, Gabrielle Curtin, Darren Davis, Monica Davis, Iain Elliot and Narelle Davis for their support, continual vision in growing our Centre and faith in me.

As an inaugural board member for CUCSM, it has been my privilege to be involved with CUC vision for nearly ten years. I have watched and marvelled at growth and evolution of a great idea, filling the educational void for regional, rural and remote learning. I pay homage to Snowy Hydro, the Cooma Monaro Shire Council, local business and passionate individuals that could see a need, and with vision and foresight built a foundation for the future.



# Centre Manager

## Nadine Holland

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This year, CUC Snowy Monaro (CUCSM) focussed on moving beyond the disruption of the COVID Pandemic. By engaging with our local community it was apparent that they were hungry for genuine, localised activities that would help them move into a more positive, forward thinking, post-COVID space. With the support of other organisations such as CUC Central and University of Canberra, CUC Snowy Monaro are now focussed on responding to this need.

Regional Partnerships Project Pool Program (RPPP) provided CUCSM an opportunity to engage with the community at a level that has not been done for several years. We were able to have in-depth discussion and learn about what the community really wants and needs when accessing university. As a result, UC has partnered with CUCSM to propose a Cooma specific toolkit of resources to be used with the adults in our community. Together, UC and CUCSM are aiming to change the narrative around higher education in Cooma. I look forward to working with UC on this project in 2023.

The Uni4Life School Holiday Program was provided to 50 primary aged children and their CUCSM adult parents/carers during the three school holiday periods in 2022. Now that we are able to access schools again, this outreach support has expanded and CUC Snowy Monaro provide support to University of Canberra (UC) in their other programs at many of the Region's primary and high schools.

Over the past three years, our Centre has been privileged to have Dr Viveka Hocking support our students as the Learning Skills Advisor. Viveka's contract ends this year and, on behalf of the CUCSM students, I would like to thank her for her time, energy and contribution to the students' study journeys.

To conclude, I thought I would share a student story that I believe represents why we do what we do. Laura (pictured on back page) is currently completing a Bachelor of Teaching (Primary) with Charles Sturt University. This is her third degree and she is due to finish this study in June, 2023. Laura is a single mum who is juggling her busy family life with work as a support teacher at two local schools. Laura uses the Centre at least four times a week because she feels that she is too distracted if she tries to complete the study at home. Laura's determined and focussed study often results in outstanding assessment marks and, combined with her ability in the school classroom, she has now received a contract to teach fulltime in 2023.



# 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 NSW Government. In 2022, the CUC network has grown to include 13 Centres across Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria.

## **What we do**

CUC Snowy Monaro is a dedicated learning and study space that supports any student, studying any course, at any Australian university. 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.

# Partners

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

## Government and Community



### 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 \*Add Centre\* is proud to assist the government to achieve this by supporting people in our region to pursue higher education in their local community.

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

### Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation

CUC \*Add Centre\* acknowledges and thanks the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation (VFFF) for its support. Funding has been used alongside local Centre funds to support our successful Learning Skills Advisor to support CUC students.

### 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.

# 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 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.

## **CQ University (CQU)**

CUC and CQU have a shared mission in supporting regional students to succeed, irrespective of where they live. The university has been a close partner of 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, CUC is offering content specific 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 CUC.

## **University of Technology Sydney (UTS)**

UTS have partnered with CUC to develop the Regional Partnerships Project Pool Program (RPPP). This Program brings together 25 universities and 16 Regional University Centres to design tailored school outreach programs 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 (USQ)**

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.

## **University of Canberra (uc)**

UC have partnered with CUCSM to provide a an outreach program within RPPP.

CUC Snowy Monaro has an informal partnership with:

## **University of Canberra (uc)**

UC and CUCSM provide an aspiration development school holiday program for primary aged students while also allowing their carer to complete their study at the Centre.

**Lauren Rendoth & Jade Lee**  
Bachelor of Education (Primary)  
CQ University



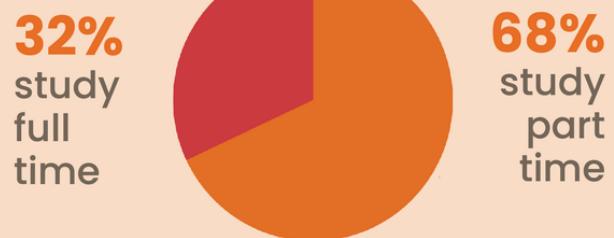
# CUC Snowy Monaro Students

SEMESTER 1, 2022

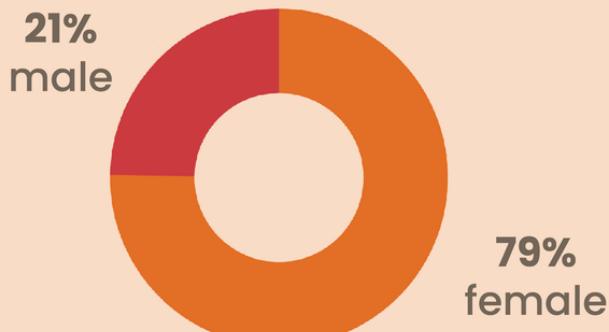
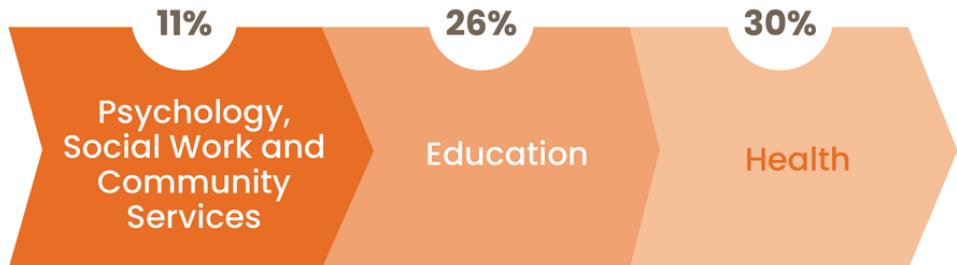


**34%**  
are the first in their family to study

**22** different universities



## TOP Areas of Study



**4.7%**  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage

# CUC Snowy Monaro Students

SEMESTER 2, 2022

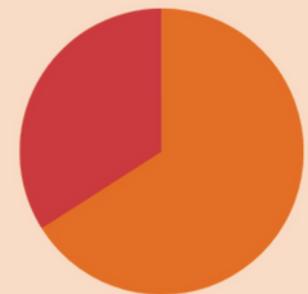


**31%**

are the first in their family to study

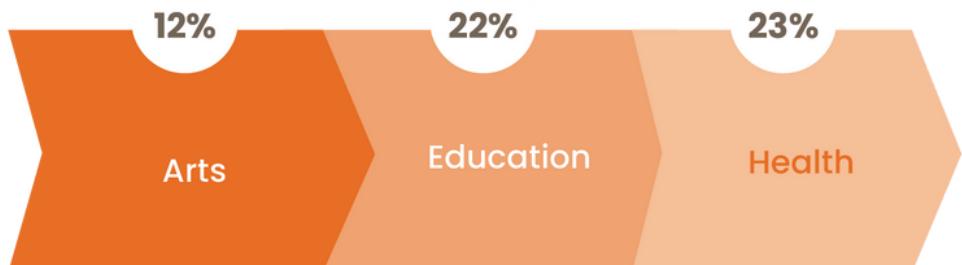
**34**  different institutions

**34%**  
study full time

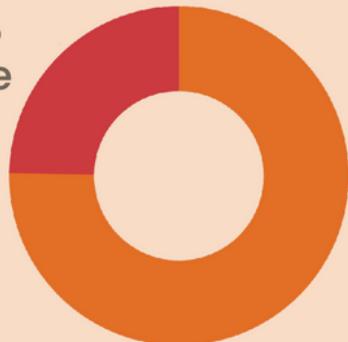


**66%**  
study part time

## TOP Areas of Study



20%  
male



80%  
female



**6%**  
Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait  
Islander heritage

# Student Support

## Here for our students

CUC students choose to study a diverse range of courses from over 40 different Australian universities and many other learning organisations. CUC has responded to student needs and created an innovative model that can support any student and studying any course.

The wrap-around model of student support provides face-to-face academic, wellbeing, technology, and administrative support in addition to what each student's course provider already offers.

These extra layers of support are crucial for many students who study with 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. 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 course of their choice from any university or other provider 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, 92% of students indicated they are more likely to continue with their studies because of the help they received from CUC, while 87% of CUC students experienced a sense of belonging to CUC, and 99% of students found the staff to be very or extremely helpful.

”

The CUC is a life saver! Now that I have discovered studying at the Centre I have submitted all of my assessments on time!

”

The best part of the CUC are the people. The other students and the staff all make studying so much easier!



**Arnie Shirvington**

Uni4Life School Holiday Program  
in partnership with University of Canberra

# Celebrating our Students

## Our greatest achievements

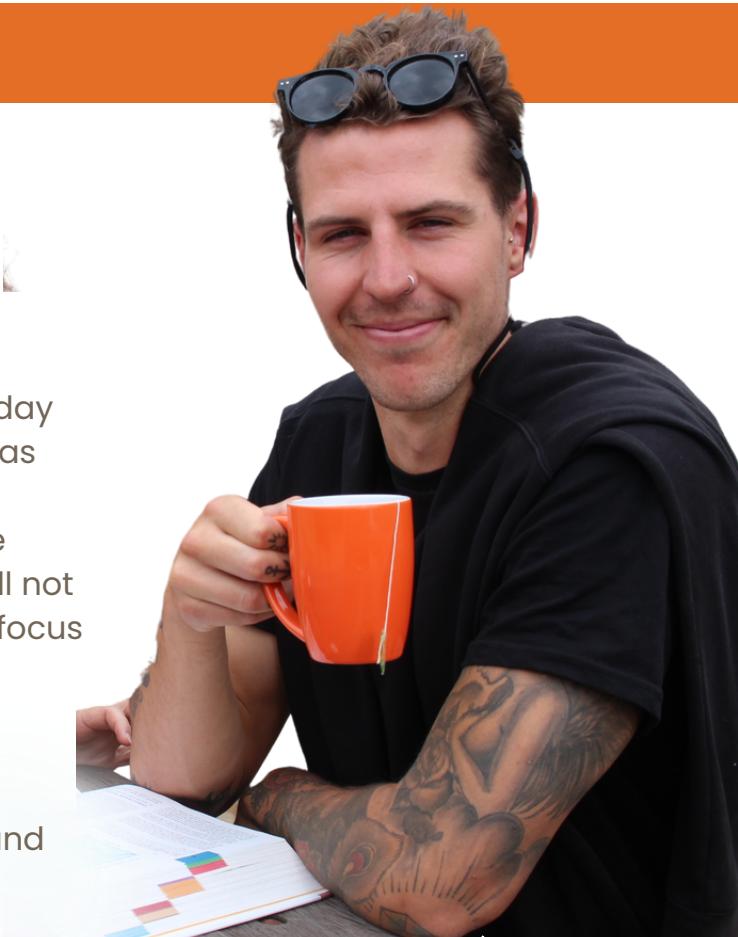
### **Jay Marshall**

**Certificate III Fitness**

**Fitness Institute**

Jay is a mature aged student who left school before completing Year 12. He aspires to one day complete a Bachelor of Health Science and has chosen to start this journey by completing a Certificate III in a related field. He feels that he needs to approach his goal at a pace that will not be too overwhelming so he can maintain his focus and motivation.

Jay is a regular at CUC Snowy Monaro and engages with the support services provided by the staff to help build his academic skills and eventually achieve his goal of completing a university degree.



### **Mary Jane Stevens**

**Bachelor of Theology**

**Charles Sturt University**

At 76, Mary Jane was proudly CUC Snowy Monaro's oldest student this year and is the third oldest student ever. Mary enjoyed regular sessions with the Learning Skills Advisor, Dr Viveka Hocking as she overcame hurdles mostly related to technology.

By completing this degree, Mary now has two bachelor degrees under her belt and is considering further study in the future.





**Laura Murdoch**

Bachelor of Teaching (Primary)

Charles Sturt University

Proudly supported by



**Australian Government**  
Department of Education

