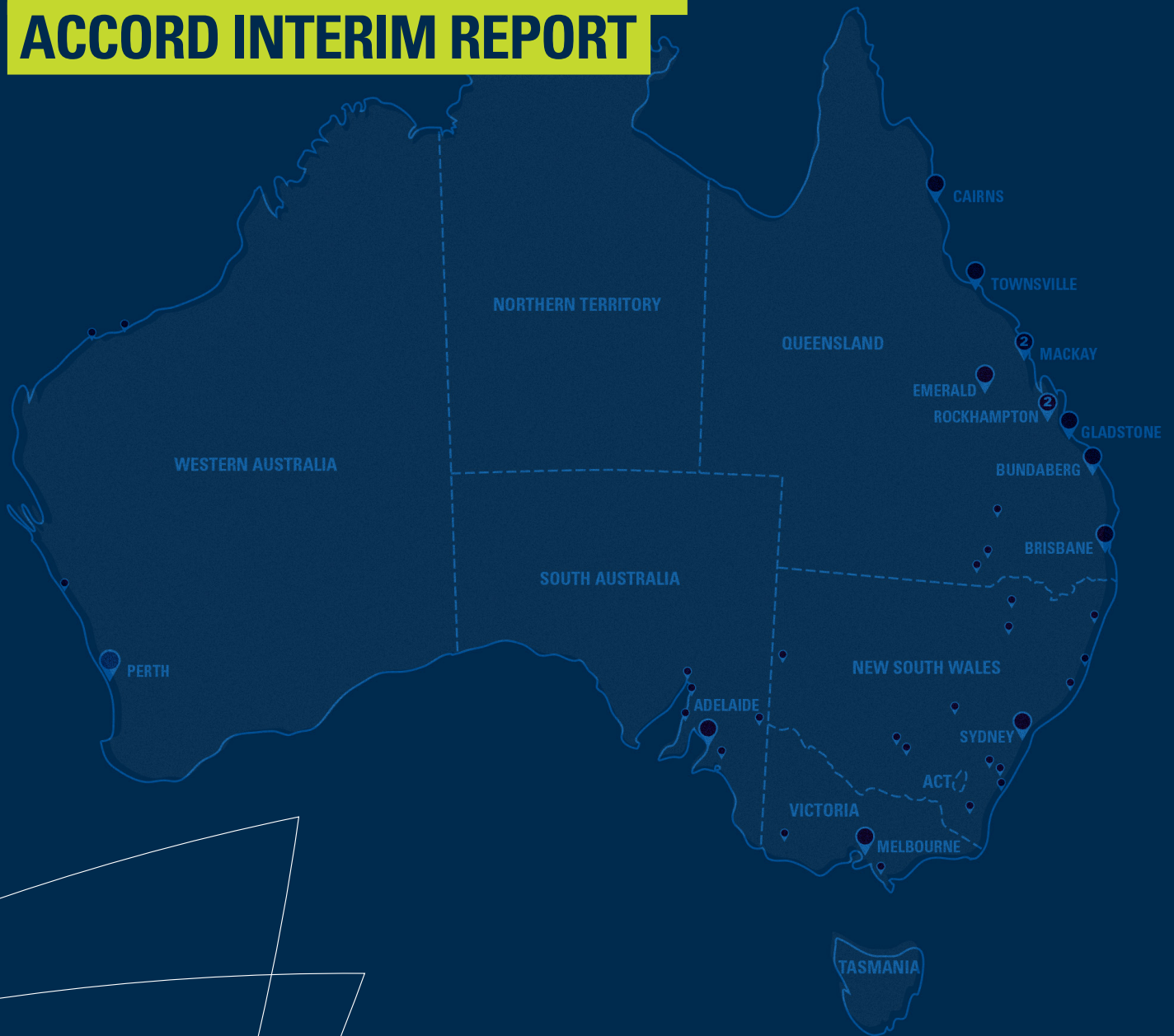


CQUNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA RESPONSE TO THE AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES ACCORD INTERIM REPORT



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At CQUniversity, we acknowledge the lands upon which we work and learn have been under the custodianship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for many thousands of years. Importantly, we recognise that in the history of Australia, the diverse land and sea Country of First Nations peoples has never been ceded.

We respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for their deep ongoing connection to Country, and for their dedication to the sustainability of their cultures, environments and communities. We recognise the unique place they hold as our nation's first educators and innovators, and the cycles of traditional knowledge transfer that has continued for millennia.

We walk in solidarity with First Nations peoples, recognising our shared history in anticipation of a shared future. As a university, we participate in shaping this common future, through truth-telling and mutual understanding to attain empowerment and equity for all.

PART A

CQUniversity welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Australian Universities Accord Interim Report. As highlighted in *Attachment A and B* of this submission, we are pleased to acknowledge the report's clear emphasis on the importance of regional universities and the role they play in fulfilling a civic responsibility to build skilled regional workforces, conduct relevant and applied research, and improve the lives of under-represented groups in regional, rural, and remote areas.

As a regional, dual-sector university, with a widespread presence across the nation, CQUniversity holds a strong 55-year history in supporting and enabling access to higher education for students from under-represented and marginalised backgrounds. This depth of experience firmly positions CQUniversity as an experienced and authoritative voice in providing practical solutions for growing the nation's skilled workforce through greater equity. Over the last 18 months, CQUniversity has conducted a detailed analysis focused on improving access and inclusivity through regional education (*See Attachment C*). This analysis forms the basis of our new **Strategic Plan for 2024 - 2028**, reaffirming our commitment to strengthening student participation within equity groups facing multiple areas of disadvantage, often compounded by various layers of challenges.

Given that a significant portion of the nation's under-represented students reside in regional and remote locations, it is logical to suggest that for the Accord Panel to effectively address the issue of equity among underserved groups, such as First Nations individuals, those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and people identifying as living with a disability, the Panel will achieve the greatest return on investment and effort by focusing on regional participation and attainment. This will require a comprehensive review of funding mechanisms encompassing aspiration, participation, support, research, infrastructure, and attainment throughout the tertiary education landscape, a view that has been echoed in a number of recent federal, Department of Education forums.

A GENUINE COMMITMENT TO EQUITY AND PARTICIPATION

To genuinely demonstrate a commitment to addressing the equity divide within Australia's tertiary education landscape at both the student and institutional level, the Australian Universities Accord must adopt strong, realistic, and long-term policy settings. As outlined in CQUniversity's submission to the Accord Discussion Paper, the Universal Higher Education Service Obligation will be a pivotal instrument to achieving this.

The UHESO's purpose is to ensure that every Australian, irrespective of their geographic location or background, enjoys equal access to the benefits of higher education as a fundamental right. Beyond that, it will serve as a conduit to not only help under-represented student cohorts to realise their aspirations but support regional institutions to secure their participation, support their attainment, deliver world-class research and contribute to the ongoing prosperity of our regions.

SUPPORTING UNDER-REPRESENTED STUDENTS TO SUCCEED

CQUniversity strongly supports the Accord Panel's commitment to enhance access, equity and participation for under-represented student cohorts, and supports the Interim Report's goal of achieving parity in participation rates across these cohorts by 2035 to address skills shortages in regional Australian communities. However, it is crucial to recognise that relying solely on organic growth will not be sufficient to achieve these objectives.

Attaining parity in equity attainment rates poses significant challenges, especially in regional areas that represent a large proportion of under-represented student cohorts. To address this, considerable efforts must be made to increase regional and remote student enrolments at regional universities. Over a period of 5 years to 2021, data shows that bachelor degree enrolments in regional Queensland, declined by approximately 13%. With these challenges in mind, it is essential that the Accord focuses not only on preventing a talent drain from regional communities but ensuring that policy settings and funding instruments are thoughtfully designed to incentivise regional students to enrol in regional institutions.

Prioritising increased enrolments from regional and remote students within regional locations will play a pivotal role in meeting sector participation and attainment targets and effectively addressing regional skills shortages. The Accord Interim Report rightly emphasises the need to increase access to preparatory and enabling programs, providing more pathways into tertiary education as a means to enhancing participation and attainment.

Enabling courses are instrumental in providing access to higher education for students from equity backgrounds, particularly those in regional and remote settings and while increasing attainment rates in regional areas is essential, preparing these students adequately for academic success is equally crucial. CQUniversity, for instance, has demonstrated that 65% of students completing preparatory programs successfully go on to complete higher level studies. **Therefore, CQUniversity strongly advocates for the uncapping of enabling student places for under-represented cohorts at regionally headquartered institutions to support their aspirations and success.**

CQUniversity welcomes the exploration of a student-centred funding model that considers the true cost of delivering education to equity cohorts and also recognises the additional cost pressures under-represented student cohorts face, especially those in regional and remote locations. **From an individual student level, it will be essential that the Panel considers the need for carefully crafted student support programs to support the upfront and ongoing costs of participating in higher education. These initiatives could encompass strategies such as scholarship programs and stipends for work-integrated learning placements. Additionally, removing the existing government-mandated requirement for students to enrol in a minimum of three subjects to qualify for Centrelink payments would enable part-time students to also maintain financial support while pursuing their studies.** Such programs will incentivise under-represented students to seek tertiary qualifications and study within regional centres, supporting the growth of skilled and sustainable workforces in these areas.

SUPPORTING REGIONAL AUSTRALIA TO SUCCEED

The Accord Interim Report rightly acknowledges the vital role regional institutions play in contributing to the prosperity of our regional communities. Comprehensive institutions like CQUniversity encompass teaching, vocational training, and applied research that addresses real-world issues. **To continue delivering upon our social responsibility within regional communities, it is imperative that regional universities remain research focused.** Diminishing our research capacity would have dire consequences for not only the regional communities and industries we work with, but overall national prosperity. Conducting research within the regions, not just for the regions, is crucial for sustainable development and economic growth.

The Accord Interim report accurately captures the unique challenges of delivering education and research in regional areas, including higher costs compared to metropolitan centres and the diseconomies of scale inherent in regional universities that impede growth, investment and social impact. These funding challenges often force regional institutions to cross-subsidise operations to support increased student load. This is exacerbated in areas such as research training where funding is provided upon completion rather than enrolment, meaning funding does not mirror growth or support requirements. Shifting to a funding model that recognises patterns in student enrolments as well as completion in these spaces, would contribute to better student experience and outcomes, thus driving increased student demand and promoting greater participation in Research Higher Degrees among under-represented cohorts.

CQUniversity notes the Panel's reflections on the current Schools funding model. **While exploring funding models from other areas of the education sector is a reasonable approach, it is essential that such models are not replicated in a 'like-for-like' state, and consideration is given to the unique experiences and outcomes of students in the higher education sector.** For instance, the Schooling Resource Standard currently prioritises students from a Non-English-Speaking Background (NESB) but largely overlooks regional and remote students when it comes to loadings that address their unique learning needs. While this approach may suit the school sector, data from the Department of Education consistently demonstrates that NESB students in higher education achieve higher success, retention, and completion rates compared to the sector average, whereas regional and remote students tend to exhibit lower success, retention, and completion rates. Therefore, it stands to reason that a higher education iteration of this model would also focus support and attention on supporting regional and remote student attainment.

Additionally, as a part of these considerations, the Panel must continue to prioritise the redesign of the current Higher Education Regional Loading funding mechanism. Presently, this funding mechanism is designed to support regional and remote students and operates by allocating a fixed dollar amount to the entire sector, which is then distributed between institutions based their share of the sector's regional and remote enrolments. **It is crucial that the future design of this funding mechanism reflects the importance of providing genuine support to the regional institutions that host a significant proportion of these under-represented student cohorts; and who experience diseconomies of scale compared to metropolitan counterparts, work in "thinner" regional markets that result in lower student numbers, and often operate multiple campuses to meet the needs of geographically dispersed communities.** This need for such institutionally focused support has been recognised by a range of historical reviews, such as the Department's 2009 Review of Regional Loading. CQUniversity not only strongly advocates for a fairer distribution of this loading to regionally headquartered universities to address the funding disparities experienced by regional universities, but also for the funding to be expanded from purely student support focused funding to also include the provision of support for regionally headquartered universities. This would enable regional institutions to ensure an equitable higher education experience in terms of delivery, physical and digital infrastructure, staff recruitment and importantly, is reflective of the true costs of supporting under-represented cohorts through to completion.

As outlined in key areas of the report, the student profile of most regional institutions does not lend itself to being a traditional, full-time school leaver cohort. CQUniversity, for instance, serves a significant portion of mature-aged, part-time students who regularly require higher levels of support. Recognising this demographic, **the exploration of future funding models aimed at supporting priority student cohorts, such as future versions of the current Regional Loading and Higher Education Participation and Partnership Programs, should shift towards a student head-count mechanism rather than the current Equivalent Full-Time Load (EFTSL) formula.** This adjustment will accurately consider the cost of supporting diverse student profiles regional universities host and ensure equitable support for all.

BUT FIRST, DO NO HARM

In the pursuit of supporting access and attainment from under-represented student cohorts, it is crucial that the Accord Panel's recommendations and, the adoption of new processes by the Federal government does not inadvertently harm the very communities and institutions that need the support the most – our regions.

Regional public tertiary education providers, such as CQUniversity, are charged with the responsibility of delivering a comprehensive suite of much-needed programs to regional communities in a long-term, sustainable way. While non-regionally headquartered providers may be incentivised by funding and policy levers to focus on under-represented cohorts, this support is often withdrawn once those incentives are removed. This not only adversely affects regional communities but also jeopardises the financial stability of the regional institutions that serve these communities (including their employment of regional people). While individual choice for students must be preserved, regional communities oppose initiatives that incentivise the migration of their young adults to metropolitan centres in the short term and metropolitan career opportunities in the longer term. We must avoid unintentionally hollowing out the regions through ill-conceived policies.

DON'T LET COMPLEX STRUCTURES STYMIE INNOVATION

The Accord Panel rightly acknowledges the inherent barriers that prevent vocational (VET) and higher education (HE) working more closely together. As Queensland's only dual-sector university, CQUniversity confronts this challenge regularly. The synergies between HE and VET delivery prove especially valuable in regions, where limited infrastructure, overlapping workforce requirements, and a greater need for VET-HE and HE-VET pathways exists. However, differences in governance, funding, compliance, and political realities significantly hinder our ability to provide seamless education in these regions. For instance, despite delivering HE in all mainland states of Australia, CQUniversity has had to offer much-needed VET health courses for free in Western Australia due to state-based restrictions that limit our delivery pathways.

In addition to the above call for the Accord Panel's support in limiting the activities of non-regionally headquartered providers in thin markets, **the process should introduce a pilot scheme for self-accreditation and single-line reporting for the delivery of VET courses by current dual-sector universities.** Such a pilot would enable us to showcase and substantiate the potential of offering integrated, well-rounded learning experiences that merge practical and theoretical elements.

Such an approach will be important to addressing the skills needs of our local communities. Currently the national system for developing and introducing new vocational qualifications through Training Packages is slow. This reality hampers the competitive need for timely market entry, as industries often progress to new technologies before these qualifications are developed. Additionally, the differing approaches to developing and accrediting vocational and higher education qualifications hinder the creation of new hybrid courses. To address this, CQUniversity proposes granting dual-sector universities the authority to develop and accredit new qualifications that seamlessly integrate VET and higher education content. Leveraging our existing expertise and rigorous academic governance frameworks, such as our internal Academic committees, would facilitate this integration.

In addition, the interim Accord report accurately noted the multiple challenges that dual sectors face having to report to two separate regulatory bodies. CQUniversity therefore agrees with the suggestion to trial streamlined regulatory arrangements, for dual-sectors, and proposes this would be enabled through regulation by TEQSA. There are already multiple areas of overlap between ASQA and TEQSA's regulatory frameworks, and CQUniversity proposes that the remaining ASQA-specific regulations could be incorporated into the TEQSA processes through a form of mutual recognition.

FOSTERING OUR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION SECTOR

CQUniversity cautions the proposed implementation of a levy on international student revenue. The university is apprehensive that this approach does not consider the full financial cost associated with both attracting and retaining international students, including expenses such as recruitment agent fees, student scholarships, support services, and notably, the costs linked with student attrition - all of which need to be factored in when determining future fee structures. The proposition of imposing a levy based on gross revenue could result in diminishing the attractiveness of an Australian education, particularly among prospective students from markets that are sensitive to pricing, such as South East Asia and other emerging global markets. Furthermore, the introduction of such a levy would likely escalate the volatility of international student revenue. This stands in direct contradiction to the Accord's aim of mitigating funding source instability.

A NATIONAL REGIONAL SOLUTION, NOT A NATIONAL REGIONAL UNIVERSITY

CQUniversity and the communities it serves welcome the focus on growing tertiary qualification attainment rates in the regions. Even putting fairness and equity aside, at a national economic level it is clear that Australia will not be able to meet its qualified workforce needs without addressing the city-region imbalance. CQUniversity cautions the suggestion to explore the creation of a National Regional University (NRU), and urges the panel to concentrate on delivering mechanisms to affirmatively fund comprehensive regional universities in a sustainable way. CQUniversity has demonstrated a successful, national approach to higher education delivery over many years, fostering an environment of quality education, training and research to students from regional communities across every mainland state of Australia.

While the Accord Interim Report accurately captures the unique challenges of delivering education and research in regional areas, including higher costs compared to urban centres and diseconomies of scale inherent in regional universities, it is unclear how an NRU model would quickly or efficiently address these issues; indeed, it is likely to be a huge distraction and could be used as an excuse to delay addressing the urgent issues immediately.

1. **Financial Strain and Resource Allocation:** Drawing on the experience of the 2014 CQUniversity and Central Queensland Institute of TAFE merger, an NRU would demand substantial resources, straining regional institutions and diverting attention from pressing regional education issues.
2. **Regional Expectations:** Regional universities like CQUniversity have strong community bonds and previous attempts to explore similar models, such as the Charles Sturt/Southern Cross University merger in 2008, faced strong community backlash.
3. **Politically Unpalatable:** Students, graduates and hundreds of thousands of alumni of regional universities in Australia are present in many state and federal seats where such decisions are politically charged, potentially further distracting efforts from the important issues.
4. **Research Collaboration:** Regional universities are already engaged in world-class applied research in partnership with their communities. They already collaborate where appropriate for maximum effect, such as combined research by the Northern Australia University Alliance (CQUniversity, JCU and CDU) and Regional Research Collaborations (Regional Universities Network, led by UNE; CQUniversity, CDU and Swinburne University).
5. **Loss of Comprehensive Approach:** The notion that an NRU would allow some campuses to specialise in teaching and/or research disciplines is read by our regions as reducing the comprehensive delivery in certain communities.
6. **Potential Job Losses:** The notion that an NRU would provide 'efficiencies in back-room operations' is read by regional communities as moving some jobs away from some regions. Regional universities often serve as the largest employers in their respective communities and safeguarding their prosperity and the prosperity of our students, alumni, and staff should be a primary focus (**see attachment E**) for a community response to the proposal).
7. **Unclear Efficiency Benefits:** CQUniversity already operates efficiently, given significant funding constraints; a model such as an NRU would not serve to provide further efficiencies.

CQUniversity recommends investing adequately to support the true cost of delivery and formalising mechanisms for continued collaboration between regional institutions through the Accord development, would be a much more suitable solution. This approach would allow regional institutions to continue delivering world class education and research, without compromising the unique identity and community bonds we have fostered within our regions, and without the need for a separate NRU.

SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are designed to support CQUniversity's key reflections on the Interim report, with the view to supporting the Panel's overarching goal of fostering an increasingly skilled national workforce through greater equity.

A GENUINE COMMITMENT TO EQUITY AND PARTICIPATION

1. To genuinely demonstrate a commitment to addressing the equity divide within Australia's tertiary education landscape at both the student and institutional level, the Australia Universities Accord (The Accord) must adopt strong, realistic, and long-term policy settings.
2. The Accord should establish a Universal Higher Education Service Obligation, to ensure that all Australians have equal access to higher education as a fundamental right.

SUPPORTING UNDER-REPRESENTED STUDENTS TO SUCCEED

3. The Accord must support policy that focuses on specifically increasing regional and remote student enrolments at regional universities, to not only grow the nation's skilled workforce but significantly support a large portion of the nation's under-represented population.
4. The Accord must see the uncapping of enabling student places for under-represented cohorts at regionally headquartered institutions to support aspirations and success.
5. To achieve the level of participation in under-represented student groups outlined in the report, individual student support programs such as scholarship programs and stipends for work-integrated learning placements, should be introduced to support the upfront and ongoing costs of participating in higher education within regional centres.
6. The Accord should consider removing the existing government-mandated requirement for students to enrol in a minimum of three subjects to qualify for Centrelink payments, enabling part-time students to maintain financial support while pursuing their studies.

SUPPORTING REGIONAL AUSTRALIA TO SUCCEED

7. The Accord must support regional universities to remain comprehensive universities that are research focused.
8. The Accord must support a funding model that funds students on enrolment rather than completion in areas such as Research Training Support, this will significantly contribute to increasing student demand and promoting greater participation in Research Higher Degrees among under-represented cohorts.
9. While exploring funding models from other areas of the education sector is a reasonable approach, it is essential that such models are not replicated in a 'like-for-like' state, and consideration is given to the unique experiences and outcomes of students in the higher education sector.
10. The Accord must reassess the current Higher Education regional loading funding mechanism to include a fairer distribution of this loading to regionally headquartered universities, addressing the funding disparities experienced by regional universities.
11. The Accord should support a funding model that recognises patterns in student enrolments as well as completion in these spaces, contributing to better student experience and outcomes.

BUT FIRST, DO NO HARM

12. The Accord must ensure adoption of new processes by the Federal government does not inadvertently harm the very communities and institutions that need the support the most – our regions.

DON'T LET COMPLEX STRUCTURES STYMIE INNOVATION

13. The Accord should propose a pilot scheme for self-accreditation and single-line reporting for the delivery of VET courses by current dual-sector universities. Such a pilot would enable the development of agile, integrated, well-rounded learning experiences that merge practical and theoretical elements.

FOSTERING OUR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION SECTOR

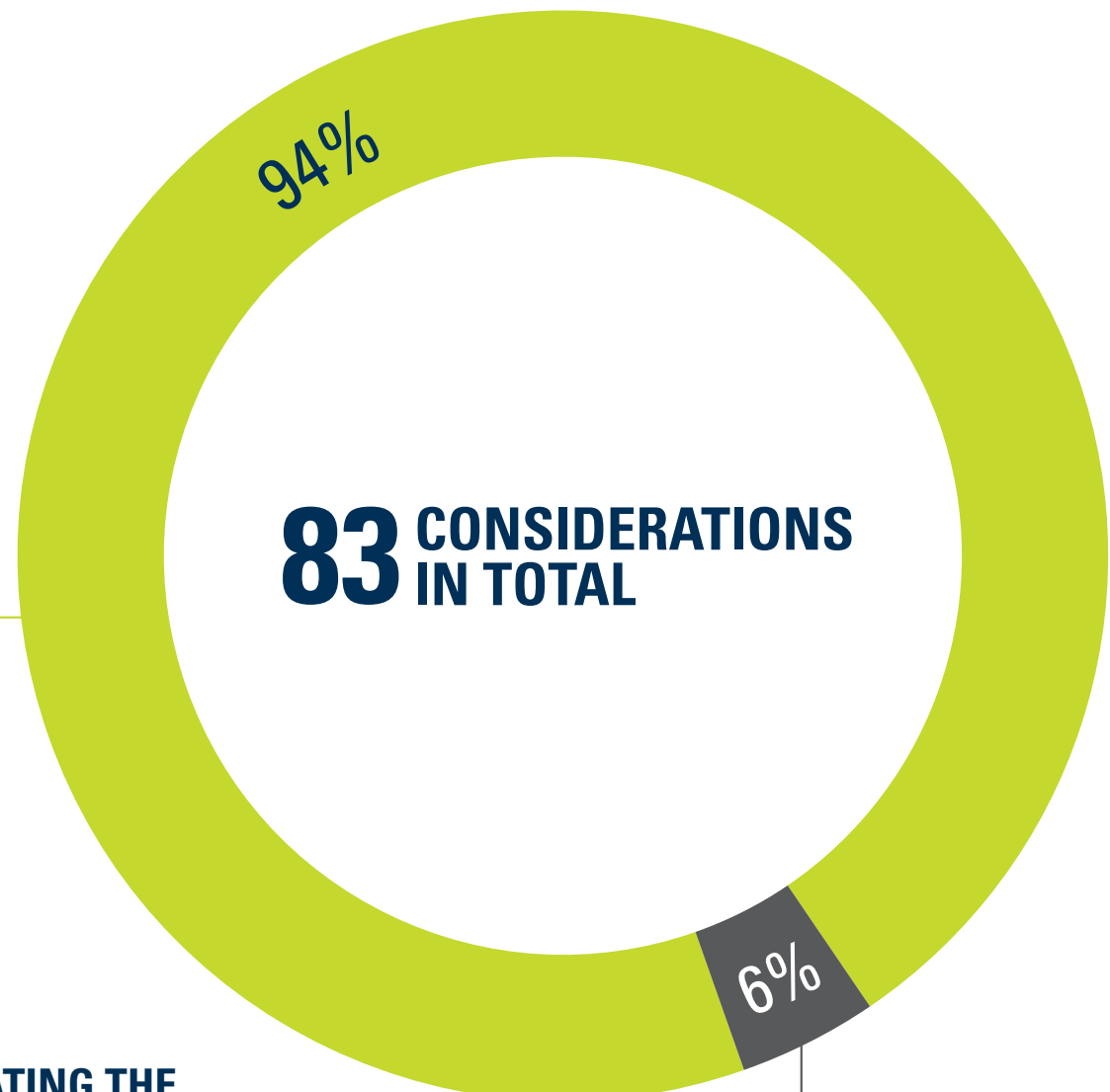
14. The Accord should reconsider the suggestion of implementing a levy on international student fees as it sends an adverse message to potential international students, and could inadvertently reduce the accessibility and attractiveness of Australian education to prospective students.

A NATIONAL REGIONAL SOLUTION, NOT A NATIONAL REGIONAL UNIVERSITY

15. The Accord should focus on adequately supporting the true cost of delivery, rather than focussing on the distraction of assessing the viability of a second National University.

SNAPSHOT ANALYSIS OF CQUNIVERSITY’S INTERIM REPORT REFLECTIONS

78 THAT WE PRINCIPALLY SUPPORT



EVOLVING THE MISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Putting First Nations at the heart of Australia’s higher education system

AGREE WITH 4/4 CONSIDERATIONS

More students enrolled in higher education, a fair system that ensures access and attainment, and a larger system that better meets national jobs and skills needs

AGREE WITH 5/5 CONSIDERATIONS

Meeting Australia’s future skills needs

AGREE WITH 12/12 CONSIDERATIONS

Equity in participation, access and opportunity

AGREE WITH 8/8 CONSIDERATIONS

Excellence in learning, teaching and student experience

AGREE WITH 4/4 CONSIDERATIONS

Fostering international engagement

AGREE WITH 8/8 CONSIDERATIONS

Serving our communities

AGREE WITH 3/3 CONSIDERATIONS

Research, innovation and research training

AGREE WITH 6/7 CONSIDERATIONS

Research, innovation and research training - part 2

AGREE WITH 5/6 CONSIDERATIONS

CREATING THE FOUNDATIONS OF A HIGH FUNCTIONING NATIONAL SYSTEM

A coherent national tertiary system

AGREE WITH 3/4 CONSIDERATIONS

Strengthening institutional governance

AGREE WITH 9/9 CONSIDERATIONS

Sustainable funding and financing

AGREE WITH 10/12 CONSIDERATIONS

BUILDING AN ENDURING ACCORD

AGREE WITH 1/1 CONSIDERATIONS

5 THAT WE BELIEVE NEED FURTHER CONSIDERATION

AREAS OF KEY SUPPORT

FIRST NATIONS

CQU embraces the report’s emphasis on supporting the success of First Nations students, aligning with our commitment to promoting inclusivity and diversity.

ACCESS

As outlined in our new strategic plan, CQU is committed to pursuing parity in access and attainment targets for under-represented student groups, in line with the recommendations presented in the Interim Report.

COMMUNITIES

CQU commends the Panel for acknowledging and prioritising the vital role that regional institutions such as ours, play in their communities.

EQUITY

CQU welcomes the acknowledgement that all Australians regardless of background or location should enjoy the same access to higher education as a fundamental right.

FUNDING

The Panel accurately outlines how regional universities have different funding needs to the sector at large and the need for a student-centred, needs-based funding mechanism.

RESEARCH

CQU acknowledges the critical importance of sustained investment in research infrastructure and outputs, and we are committed to ensuring that this principle is applied within regional settings to foster innovation and growth.

AREAS OF FURTHER CONSIDERATION

CQU welcomes the emphasis the Accord Panel has placed on “growing skills through greater equity” as a fundamental theme of the Interim Report.

Aligned with our new Strategic Plan “We Change Lives” for 2024-2028, CQUniversity wholeheartedly endorses this aspiration and has already taken significant steps to incorporate it into our future plans. However, to fully realise this commitment, CQUniversity believes it is crucial to bring the Panel’s attention to certain areas of concern that need further consideration.

INTERNATIONAL REVENUE LEVY

CQU cautions the implementation of a levy on international student revenue and is concerned that it does not consider the net financial position of attracting and retaining international students. A levy imposed on gross revenue could significantly diminish the attractiveness of Australian education to prospective students particularly in price sensitive markets such as South East Asia and other large emerging markets. Moreover, the levy would increase the instability of international student revenue, which is in direct opposition to the Accord suggestion to reduce instability in funding sources.

A NATIONAL REGIONAL UNIVERSITY

CQU firmly believes that addressing funding issues directly presents a more effective approach to bridging the disparity between regional and metropolitan areas, rendering the establishment of a separate National Regional University unnecessary.

IMPORTANCE OF REGIONAL RESEARCH

CQU strongly disagrees with any suggestion that Australian research is of little use, especially as it pertains to regional institutions. Regional universities specialise in applied research that holds significant importance. The implications of regional universities specialising to a lesser extent in research would have dire consequences on regional communities, industries, and overall prosperity. It is crucial to conduct research within the regions, not just for the regions, to ensure their sustainable development and growth.

26 JULY 2023



OUR CONTEXT

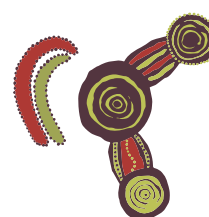
INFORMING OUR NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

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CQUniversity respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we live, work and learn and pays respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first peoples, educators and innovators of this country.

THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT



We are facing unprecedented challenges – social, economic and environmental – driven by accelerating globalisation and a rapid rate of technological developments. At the same time, those forces are providing us with myriad of new opportunities for advancement.

In 2022, we undertook the Education Futures project, aimed at enhancing our preparedness and openness for the uncertain future by exploring its potential impacts and possibilities. Although the future remains unpredictable, this project has helped us gain a better understanding of how to navigate and respond to potential challenges and opportunities.

The Education Futures project aimed to assess the external landscape and analyse the potential prospects presented by prevailing trends, in light of the demands expressed by our students and industries regarding their education, training and research needs.

The conventional university approach is no longer applicable, and with the insights garnered from Education Futures, we can confidently forge ahead with our next strategic plan, well-informed about the terrain.

MEGATRENDS

CLIMATE CHANGE

As climate change continues, natural disasters and abnormal weather patterns will increasingly have effects on our socioeconomics, demographics, crop production, food security, infrastructure, migration, and political landscape in unprecedented ways.

SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS

A rise in individual self-interest accompanied with confidence in self-judgement as individuals become empowered to demand specific outcomes, resulting in the decline of social cohesion and the mass market. Individual empowerment comes from significant advances in education, technology, and healthcare, and as the global extreme poverty rate goes down, the middle class has risen in importance.

DIGITAL DISRUPTION

Also known as the fourth industrial revolution, this is the proliferation of new mobile technologies, the rise of Artificial Intelligence (ChatGPT), automation, the Internet of Things, reliance on sensor and wearable technologies, and increased reliance on digital interaction has shifted the world from an analogue to a digital one.

DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS

Demographic trends are demonstrating that older people are a rapidly growing proportion of the world's population. Among many things, this trend can be attributed to advances in medical technology and healthcare, changes in diet, and an overall lower fertility rate. Future global pandemics and emerging diseases should not be discounted in terms of future demographic impacts.

EMERGING ECONOMIES AND GEOPOLITICAL PRESSURES

In the coming years, enormous economic growth is forecast for China, India and the Middle East. Other emerging economies include Brazil, Russia, South Africa, and Indonesia. Ongoing geopolitical pressures brought about by global events, such as the conflict in Ukraine, the deepening China-Russian alliance, and China's ambitions in the Pacific Island region, is driving uncertainty. It is likely more frequent trade wars and rising protectionism will drive instability.

DISRUPTION TIMELINE

	NOW	IMMINENT	EMERGING	DISTANT
CLIMATE CHANGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Electric vehicles » Batteries and solar » Clean energy and renewable generation » Triple bottom line investment rationale » Natural disasters and extreme weather » Shareholder actions for low ESG performers » Global net-zero goals leave little room for fossil fuel » Energy transition is largely driven by individual companies rather than government policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » National clean energy infrastructure (including transmission, dams, rail, hydrogen, others) » Resource scarcity and circular economy » New energy and fertiliser / energy replacement – key customers accelerate transition¹ » Biodiversity loss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Exit of combustion engines » Closure of dirty fuel exports » Sanctions on non-conforming industries » Values driven investment rationale » Coalitions to address urgent issues » Forced relocation » New supporting infrastructure industries » Widespread agriculture innovation and transition¹ » Market mechanisms to compel energy transition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Food and resource scarcity driving reorganisation of national and global priorities and boundaries and social cohesion² » Rejection of combustion fuel for travel » Dislocation of communities
SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Full employment, unfilled vacancies » Great resignation / 19% active job seekers 4Q2021³ » Insecure work » Cultural and political polarisation 'echo chamber' » Regional service quality gaps⁴, primarily housing, internet, water security and education and transport » Mental health and wellness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Shift of retail and manufacturing⁵ jobs to fields that require a degree » Increase in healthcare and social assistance jobs » Hyperinflation/ Stagflation » Work-learn-work-learn 'student for life' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Transition to a services and technology led economy⁶ » Reduction in agriculture jobs » Prioritisation and formal recognition of personal life skill and resilience education » Regulation of insecure work (gig economy) » Integration of Indigenous themes and traditions into industries 	
DIGITAL DISRUPTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Digitisation » Labour intensive education delivery » Orchestrated personalised experiences » Information is ubiquitous » Wearables and personal tech » Community or peer driven online trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Data driven autonomous industry (to 2025-40)⁷ » Penetration of virtual, augmented reality (17-35% by 2026)²⁰ » Open and shared information resources » AI and AI driven personalisation (from 21%-49% by 2026)⁸ » Cybersecurity lagging rate of innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Industries have 25% Machine customers » Rejection of technology / technology themed human rights » 5G supercharging automation, IoT and re-emergence of urban/ regional digital divide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Distributed and democratised platforms » Metaverse businesses³ » Universal Internet access⁹ » Online access implants
DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Increased wage costs including of university inputs (educators) » COVID induced rising retention rate of secondary school students¹⁰ » Escalating public debt¹¹ locally and globally » Record net migration (45,000) to regions (71,000 jobs on offer)¹², primarily QLD and SA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 2002 'Costello' Baby Boom reaches school leaver age » Return of migration and increased reliance for (~15%) population growth¹³ » Reduction in rural/remote QLD population » 28% increase in SE QLD population (to 2031) » Moderate growth 6-10% in Nth QLD¹⁴ » Return to urbanisation (post COVID) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Growth in regions primarily through ageing rather than those of working age » Ageing workforce, difficult to replace lost skills » Pressure on local services due to fall in demand (services not related to ageing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Universal basic income and or recognition of unpaid work » Early and proactive health issue prevention strategies
EMERGING ECONOMIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Number of university students growing in developing markets » Influence within Asia-Pacific and soft power¹⁵ » Pessimism for global recovery¹⁶ » Reversal of globalisation and free trade » Geopolitical conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Rebound of international student market » Appreciation of Australian dollar » Increased perception of relative safety of Australia as a destination » Renewed nationalism and resilience » Increased projection of power¹⁷ » Volatile relationship with China » Stronger alignment and allegiances of nations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Protection of vulnerable supply chains and essential or 'national interest' industries » Africa and the subcontinent becomes the source of population growth » Geopolitical and economic confrontations » Space exploitation and politics » Erosion of international bodies¹⁸ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Emergence of African and South American economies

WHAT OUR STUDENTS SAID

In November 2022, 495 students participated in the student preferences survey. This survey was undertaken to understand our student's needs and preferences when it came to their learning journey. The high level results are summarised below.

- » **Assessment options:** 38% of respondents reported they would be “a great deal” pleased with assignments only, with 45% of respondents reporting the quantity and types of assessments offered had “no impact” on their decision to attend CQUniversity.
- » **Work-integrated learning:** 42% of respondents reported they were “extremely interested” in work-integrated learning.
- » **Study Abroad program:** 35% of respondents reported they were “not at all interested” in a Study Abroad program, however 26% of respondents reported they were “extremely interested” in a Study Abroad program. The preferred duration is for 1-2 months and the preferred destinations are Europe, America and Canada.
- » **Professional bodies:** 73% of respondents reported there are specific professional bodies relevant to their future career aspirations that they would be interested in integrating within university learning.
- » **Scheduling notice:** 62% of respondents reported that 1-2 months notice of their schedule before the start of training/studies is sufficient.
- » **Scheduling options:** 49% of respondents reported a preference for online pre-recorded lectures to watch at their own pace regarding their class structure, 40% of respondents reported a preference for most schoolwork/classes to be held all day for 1-2 days per week, and 68% of respondents reported a preference for three 12-week terms, allowing multiple units per term. 27% of respondents reported that scheduling availability and options “very much” impacted their decision to attend CQUniversity, conversely, 25% of respondents reported that “not at all” did it impact their decision.
- » **Academic Learning Centre:** 42% of respondents had heard of ALC but had not used it.
- » **Support services:** 47% of respondents reported that careers and leadership training is the “most important” support service, while 60% of respondents reported alumni mentorship as the “least important”.
- » **Amenities and social opportunities:** 74% of respondents reported that spaces for studying/study group areas is the “most important” amenity, while 55% of respondents reported spirituality services as the “least important”.
- » **General feedback:** the most common theme showed a preference for CQUniversity due to the flexibility that online learning provides or at the very least, mixed mode learning (online and on-campus) (31%). This is closely followed by an interest in more opportunities to network and make connections with students, lecturers and professionals in their field of study, in person and virtually (25%).

WHAT OUR INDUSTRIES SAID

In November 2022, 79 industry representatives responded to the industry skills survey. The goal of the survey was to test regional responses to skills challenges against the national responses undertaken by the Australian Industry Standards (AIS) in 2022 and the data in the National Skills Commission reports. The high level results are summarised below:

- » **Non-technical skill needs:** flexibility and adaptability rated the most important non-technical skill set required by our industries within the CQUniversity catchment.
- » **Technical skill needs:** digital and technology skills rated the most important technical skill set required by our industries within the CQUniversity catchment.
- » **Workforce qualification requirements:** 45% of the workforce is expected to need a bachelor's degree or higher, 41% of the workforce is expected to need a VET qualification, and 21% of the workforce is unlikely to need a formal qualification.
 - » The NSC identified 53% of new jobs in the next five years will require a bachelor's degree or above.
- » **Apprentices:** 65% of our industries within the CQUniversity catchment indicated they will be employing apprentices within the next 12 months, compared to 48% per the AIS survey.
- » **Occupation shortages in the next 12 months:** (in order) teachers, tradesmen, engineering, and machine operators.
- » **Projected employment growth by industry over the next five years:** (in order) health care and social assistance, accommodation and food services, education and training, logistics, and professional, scientific, and technical skills (STEM), and construction (NSC 2020 Employment Projections, October 2022).

SKILLS OF THE FUTURE

In December 2021, the National Skills Commission released the *State of Australia's Skills 2021: now and into the future*, outlining how emerging and trending skills are changing the nature of work across many roles and driving growth in emerging occupations. The report showed that data and digital skills are among the fastest growing emerging skills. This is consistent with the megatrend around 'Digital Disruption' and the concept of 'Industry 4.0'. The NSC report concluded that:

- » Among the key skills that will be needed for jobs of the future are care, computing, cognitive and communication skills.
- » The NSC views computing as a key skill of the future, reflecting the job creation aspect of this megatrend.
- » The NSC's analysis also highlights the importance of core competencies or 'employability skills', with high proficiency in core competencies correlating with a decrease in the likelihood of automation. Within that group of core competencies, high proficiency in oral communication and writing are the least likely to be automated – a finding that sits behind the NSC's view that communication is a core skill of the future.
- » The combination of an ageing population and the lower ability to automate tasks and jobs in the cluster family of health and care suggests that 'care' is also likely to be a key skill needed in coming years.

One of the impacts of the pandemic on the labour market appears to have been an acceleration of long-term trends. One such trend is the shift in demand for labour away from routine tasks (repetitive physical labour that can be replicated by machines), towards non-routine (non-repetitive or non-codifiable) work. The greater difficulty in automating non-routine cognitive jobs and tasks (at high and lower skill levels) also suggests these types of jobs – 'cognitive' – will remain in high demand into the future.

AUSTRALIAN TERTIARY EDUCATION SECTOR AT A GLANCE

TEACHING, LEARNING AND FUNDING

- » Educational attainment has been increasing throughout the OECD, in particular at the tertiary level. Between 2000 and 2021, the share of 25 to 34 year-olds with tertiary attainment increased on average by 21 percentage points. In Australia, the share increased at an even faster pace, by 23 percentage points (from 31% in 2000 to 54% in 2021). Australia is one of the 14 OECD countries where at least half of 25 to 34 year-olds have a tertiary education.ⁱ
- » In 2021ⁱⁱ:
 - » 4.3 million students were enrolled in nationally recognised vocational education and training (VET), up 9% from 2020
 - » 3,529 registered training organisations (RTOs) delivered nationally recognised VET
 - » an estimated 24% of the Australian resident population aged 15 to 64 years participated in nationally recognised VET in Australia.
- » In 2020, there were 1,057,777 domestic students studying at Australia's 39 comprehensive universities, an increase of 4% on 2019. This is the largest annual increase in total domestic enrolments since 2013, mainly due to the increase in postgraduate coursework enrolments.
- » Of the 1,057,777 domestic students studying at Australian universities in 2020, 70% were studying bachelor degrees, 19% were studying postgraduate coursework degrees and a further 4% were studying postgraduate research degrees. The majority (65%) of students – 685,404 – were studying their qualifications full-time in 2020. However, this varied at different levels of study, ranging from 74% for bachelor degree students to 38% for postgraduate coursework students.
- » Total Australian Government outlay in higher education spending (including research) has almost tripled over the past three decades; from \$6.9 billion in 1989 to \$20.4 billion in 2020–21 (in 2020 dollars). However, most of the increase is due to the growth in HELP loans – of which 80% are expected to be repaid in the future.

- » In 2018, Australia's total investment – public and private – in tertiary education institutions as a share of GDP (1.88%) was above the OECD average (1.43%) and the sixth highest, behind the US, Chile, Canada, UK and Norway.ⁱⁱⁱ

RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND FUNDING

- » In 2019-20, Australia's universities undertook 36% of Australia's total R&D, and almost 80% of public sector research.
- » Universities perform 87% of discovery or basic research in Australia.
- » In 2020, universities performed approximately 45.3% of all applied research in Australia compared to 38.9% by Australian businesses.
- » For every \$1 invested in research, \$5 is returned to the economy.
- » For every 1% increase in R&D, Australia's productivity rises by 0.13 percent points.
- » Even though Australia is home to just 0.3% of the world's population, we produce around 3% of the world's research.
- » More than 90% of Australian university research is rated as world class or higher.
- » Universities represent the majority of Australia's research workforce at 81,090 FTE out of a total workforce of 180,540 FTE (45%) in 2020.
- » Postgraduate students comprise 57% of the university R&D workforce, making them significant contributors to Australia's research efforts.
- » The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) works directly with the Skills Senior Officials Network (SSON) and undertakes annual consultation with key stakeholders to determine national research priorities. Research projects that inform these priorities are developed by NCVER, endorsed by the SSON and conducted as part of NCVER's broader research program.

INTERNATIONAL

- » International education^{iv}:
 - » is Australia's fourth largest export
 - » was worth \$37.5 billion to the Australian economy in 2019-20
 - » educated 445,925 international students at Australian universities in 2019, and
 - » supported close to 250,000 jobs in the Australian economy in 2019 data.
- » However, international student enrolments fell 7.4% in 2020 to 413,088 students, the first decline since 2013, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- » In 2020, 28.1% of students enrolled in Australian universities were from overseas, compared to 30% in 2019 and 19% in 2001.
- » The share of international students who are enrolled in postgraduate studies, both coursework and research, has increased from 35% in 2001 to 46% in 2020, while the share of students pursuing a bachelor's degree has declined from 60% to 50% over the same period.
- » In 2020, China remained the biggest source of international students, at 33%, followed by India, at 14%^v.
- » The Student Experience Survey (SES) 2021 report, prior to 2020, showed the international undergraduate student rating of the quality of their overall education experience varied within a narrow band of 78% and 80%^{vi}.
- » The Australian Government has announced a planned increase in the duration of post study work rights of international students to strengthen the pipeline of skilled labour. Selected degrees in areas of verified skill shortages will increase from:
 - » two years to four years for select bachelor's degrees
 - » three years to five years for select master's degrees, and
 - » four years to six years for select PhD's.

DIVERSITY AND EQUITY

- » The number of undergraduate students from key equity groups, including Indigenous students, students with disability, and students from low socio-economic backgrounds and regional and remote areas has increased significantly since 2008:
 - » Indigenous undergraduate students has increased from 7,038 in 2008 to 16,559 in 2020 (135% increase)

and as a proportion of all domestic undergraduate students, Indigenous student enrolments increased from 1.3% in 2008 to 2% in 2020, a growth of 0.8 of one percentage point.

- » Undergraduate students with disability have increased from 24,311 in 2008 to 65,444 in 2020 (169% increase) and as a proportion of all domestic undergraduate students, enrolments of students with disability grew by 3.7%, from 4.3% in 2008 to 8% in 2020.
- » Low SES undergraduate students have increased from 90,467 in 2008 to 147,802 in 2020 (63% increase) and as a proportion of all domestic undergraduate students, low SES student enrolments grew from 16.1% in 2008 to 18.1% in 2020, a growth of two percentage points.
- » Students from regional and remote areas have increased from 110,124 in 2008 to 157,171 in 2020 (43% increase) and as a proportion of all domestic undergraduate students, enrolments of students from regional and remote areas declined by 0.4 of a percentage point, from 19.6% to 19.2%.
- » The National Centre for Vocational Education Research publishes equity group participation rates, achievements and outcomes of VET students, with 2019 data being the most recent. Results showed:
 - » Indigenous peoples enrolled in VET is 4%, compared to the total number of VET students. Qualifications completed by Indigenous peoples is 31%, compared to 42% by non-Indigenous people.
 - » People with disability enrolled in VET is 4%, compared to the total number of VET students. Qualifications completed by people with disability is 38%, compared to 41% by people without disability.
 - » Low SES people enrolled in VET is 17%, compared to the total number of VET students. Qualifications completed by low SES people is 37%, compared to 42% by people from higher SES.
 - » People from remote areas enrolled in VET is 2%, compared to the total number of VET students. Qualifications completed by people from remote areas is 32%, compared to 42% by people in non-remote areas.
 - » People from non-English speaking background enrolled in VET is 14%, compared to the total number of VET students. Qualifications completed by people from non-English speaking background is 41%, which equals those from English speaking backgrounds.

CQUNIVERSITY AT A GLANCE

CQUNIVERSITY'S GEOGRAPHIC FOOTPRINT IS DIVIDED INTO THE FOLLOWING REGIONS:

- » Cairns and Far North Queensland
- » Central Queensland (includes Rockhampton, Capricorn Coast and Central Highlands)
- » New South Wales
- » North Queensland and Hinterland
- » South Australia
- » South East Queensland
- » Victoria
- » Western Australia
- » Wide Bay Burnett and Gladstone Region
- » Jakarta, Indonesia.



CQUNIVERSITY'S 2022 ANNUAL REPORT HIGHLIGHTED THAT IN 2022 THERE WERE:

340 VET AND HIGHER EDUCATION COURSES OFFERED

1791 TOTAL EMPLOYEES (EXCLUDING CASUAL APPOINTMENTS)

30 440 TOTAL STUDENTS

8709 VET STUDENTS

11 339 NEW STUDENTS IN 2022

17 626 ON CAMPUS STUDENTS

13 133 ONLINE STUDENTS

1786 STUDENTS ENROLLED IN A PATHWAY OR ENABLING COURSE

1817 INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

4311 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

18 018 STUDENTS FROM REGIONAL/REMOTE BACKGROUNDS

628 RESEARCH HIGHER DEGREE STUDENTS

127 301 ALUMNI

49 029 INTERNATIONAL ALUMNI

5775 GRADUATING STUDENTS (EXCLUDING ENABLING, NON AWARD AND OTHER NON AQF COURSES)

2503 STUDENTS AWARDED SCHOLARSHIPS OR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

\$3 669 655 VALUE OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND SCHOLARSHIPS OFFERED

\$21.7 MILLION RESEARCH FUNDING

\$18.9 MILLION INVESTED IN FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

\$14.94 MILLION INVESTMENT IN TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL INVESTMENT

REPORTING AN OPERATING DEFICIT OF **\$24.3 MILLION** AT THE CONCLUSION OF 2022.

OUR CHALLENGES

The tertiary education sector holds immense significance for the future of the Australian economy and society. However, the sector is facing major internal transformations, coupled with substantial external pressures, which pose significant challenges and necessitate careful consideration in future planning. To identify the market shifts and strategic opportunities with the greatest potential impact on CQUniversity, it is important to consider the following five realities shaping the future of the education sector, as cited by the Education Advisory Board (EAB).

INTERNATIONAL ENROLMENT

International growth will increasingly come from the most price-sensitive regions. Before COVID, the international student market growth was predominately from China and India, which benefited most Anglo markets, particularly Australia and Canada.

Now, Africa and Latin America are presenting as the future growth markets, with 25% of 15 to 24 year olds living in Africa by 2030, and a 68 million current and projected decline in 18 to 23 year olds in China from 2010 to 2050.

Of these future growth markets, the pandemic and inflation lead prospective students to prioritise cost in enrolment decisions and cost of living in the destination country, with career support also being a key differentiator and central in choice.

Striking a balance between diversifying and sustaining international student markets is tenuous. From a diversification perspective, it minimises risk to the student recruitment strategy, broadens access to international education, and increases diversity of perspectives and experiences on campus. On the other hand, diversifying does not bring the immediate return on investment, with business model pressures favouring sustaining through full-fee paying students, which is not certain from the future growth markets.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Virtual and hybrid student experience is now the cost of doing business. Before COVID, most student services were in-person and difficult to navigate; the 'one-stop shops' was the paragon of customer service, and online learning was often misunderstood as it was less rigorous.

Now, with heightened expectations of both in-person and virtual services, which is unlikely to change, institutions need to prepare for long-term virtual services investments, and non-classroom services and support will drive the hybrid education and training evolution. The emerging expectations of students in the new decade highlights that learning should be flexible, multi-modal, and interdisciplinary, with connected, collaborative physical and digital environments that provide an Amazon-like experience and are curated and personalised.

SPACE

The physical campus remains core but must become multi-modal. Before COVID, space was designed around in-person as the norm, with tech-enabled spaces predominately one-off pilots, and most space built for single-purposes; overall, virtual engagement was divorced from space planning.

Now, the digital and physical estates are increasingly becoming two sides of the same coin. It is important to anticipate how multi-modal learning and working can transform the campus. Students and staff expect continued modernisation of space and 'smart' building technologies are being embraced.

The pandemic experience elevated the importance of the virtual and in-person experience. The success of virtual operations and benefits of studying and working from home elevated the value of virtual, however, the legacy of social distancing and sub-par online interactions reaffirmed the value of place. This dichotomy leads to question how the demand for different space types will change, do we need to make every campus space tech-enabled, should we end some of our off-campus leases, could we monetise some of our real estate assets that are underutilised, and will we need as big of a campus footprint going forward?

MENTAL HEALTH

The solution to the mental health crisis lies in preventive support rather than simply increasing the number of counsellors available. Before COVID, rising levels of anxiety and depression were already at crisis point and the increase in demand on counselling far outpaced enrolment. Institutions started trying to scale counselling services and its non-clinical resources as mental health required more budget and more senior time.

Now, mental health poses as a barrier to institutional strategic success due to rising levels of isolation and grief, leading to greater expectations of support in clinical and non-clinical solutions, and integrated wellness environments for students, staff and other members of the university community.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's report on COVID and the impact on young people showed that 30% of the young Australians surveyed indicated high levels of psychological distress, 50% held worries of isolation from friends, and 36% experienced increased stress and anxiety. With this, it is important that institution-wide efforts grow and whole of institution approaches to mental health are embedded into practice and culture.

TALENT

A centralised talent strategy is now a must amidst a looming demographic drought. Before COVID, universities were mostly immune to future workforce challenges, and that any talent crunch was short-term and addressable with compensation as tertiary education had a distinct value proposition that attracted staff. Recruitment and retention were delegated to the human resources department and department leaders.

Now, with the perfect storm of COVID, hybrid work, and the great resignation, talent shortages are a long-term reality and tertiary education employment benefits are seen as out-of-step or have become unappreciated by the job seeker. Effective talent strategies require a re-focus from surviving early pandemic revenue losses, to labour as a strategic asset and growing the institution in an era of labour shortage, inflation and competition.

At the height of the pandemic, the Australian tertiary education sector experienced a labour loss of 10% in the December 2020 to February 2021 quarter. Now, job postings for non-academic staff are passing the pre-pandemic high, however the employment pool hasn't recovered, with the highest need for student services staff. Talent now holds firm healthier work-life boundaries and question the hustle culture and sacrifices required to advance.

To compete in today's talent market there needs to be a focus on building internal talent pipelines, driving retention through improved morale and engagement, a differentiated employee value proposition and employer of choice brand, and a commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.

OUR PERFORMANCE

CQUniversity conducts performance reporting every six months to assess our progress and identify areas for improvement, enabling us to optimise our outcomes. The *Our Future is You* Strategic Plan (2019-2023) has been our guiding framework since 2019 and as we build on this with the New Strategic Plan, it is important to recap on our performance. The below performance summary is as of 31 December 2022.

KPI	2023 TARGET	2019		2020		2021		2022	
		TARGET	ACTUAL	TARGET	ACTUAL	TARGET	ACTUAL	TARGET	ACTUAL
Deliver a new student-centred curriculum by 2022.	Due 2022	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Deliver	100% Delivered
Achieve an increase in unit completion rates for VET qualifications.	84.6%	85%	86.4%	85.75%	86.8%	86.5%	86.3%	87.25% (54,517)	80% (42,942)
Increase Higher Education completions.	60%	50%	53.60%	52.5%	52.2%	55%	52.9%	57.5%	49%
Increase student retention rates.	>78.67%	76.67%	75.30%	76.84%	74.96%	77%	77.6%	>77.17%	77.52%
Increase the overall student experience result as measured by QILT.	>80% (UG)	79%	77.5%	79.25%	75.3%	79.5%	78.4%	>79.75%	78%
Maintain the student satisfaction result as measured by the International Student Barometer.	>90%	>90%	91.7% (2018)	>90%	91.7% (2018)	>90%	88.4%	>90%	88.4% (2021)
Achieve and maintain the graduate and student satisfaction result as measured by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).	86%	80%	86.1%	80%	85.5%	86%	91.75%	86%	89.4%
Increase EFTSL across VET, Undergraduate, Postgraduate and research courses.	15,797 EFTSL	19,755 EFTSL	19,874 EFTSL	16,131.70 EFTSL	18,780.20 EFTSL	16,290.95 EFTSL	16,324.7 EFTSL	11,713.38 HE EFTSL 60,772 VET Enrol	11,949 HE EFTSL 61,951 VET Enrolments
Increase student numbers in short course and professional development offerings.	6,996 students	Baseline	4,607 students	+10% (5,067 students)	6,283 students	+10% (6,911 students)	7,212 students	+10% (7,933 students)	6,996 students
Increase courses with Social Innovation embedded within curriculum.	90%	18%	19.65%	35%	60%	55%	81%	75%	81%
Increase student completions across student equity groups (Domestic Bachelor Low SES, 9-year completion rate).	45.38%	44.38%	45.16%	44.63%	45.25%	44.88%	53.6%	45.13%	47.1%
Maintain Fields of Research recognised as 'at, above or well above world standard' and above.	N/A	22	22	22	22	22	22	N/A ERA Cancelled	N/A

KPI	2023 TARGET	2019		2020		2021		2022	
		TARGET	ACTUAL	TARGET	ACTUAL	TARGET	ACTUAL	TARGET	ACTUAL
Double the annual delivery of our researcher training programs.	N/A	20 staff	20 staff	25 staff	50 staff	30 staff	75 staff	35 staff	45 staff
Achieve an increase in external research income.	\$22.5m	\$15.55m	\$14.85m	\$16m	\$21.94m	\$17.9m	\$22.64m	\$20m	\$22.059m
Grow the Research Higher Degree student load.	350 EFTSL	250 EFTSL	234.5 EFTSL	275 EFTSL	279.4 EFTSL	300 EFTSL	332.64 EFTSL	325 EFTSL	350 EFTSL
Establish two international joint research partnerships.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	Triple Helix Project, Indonesia	1	ACIAR CMERC
Improve in sector rankings.	Improve year on year	THE WUR: 501-600	THE WUR: 601-800 QS WUR: 601-650	THE WUR: 601-800	THE WUR: 801-1000 QS WUR: 591-600	THE WUR: 501-600	THE WUR: 801-1000 QS WUR: 601-650	THE WUR: 401-500	The WUR: 601-800
Deliver two successful commercialisation outcomes.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	4 opp's progressed	1	4 opp's progressed
Achieve and maintain the overall staff satisfaction rating.	86%	86%	83%	86%	73%	86%	77%	86%	N/A Not measured in 2022
Increase the total workforce represented by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	≥3%	2%	2%	2.25%	1.23%	2.5%	1.47%	1.5%	1.99%
All teaching academics will have an approved scholarship plan in line with TEQSA requirements.	Due 2022	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Achieve	Achieved
Increase staff holding or be studying towards a VET or tertiary qualifications.	75%	59%	74%	62%	81%	66%	76.25%	70%	77.37%
Increase social and Indigenous procurement activities.	\$500,000	\$116,600	\$625,482	\$500,000	\$581,159	\$500,000	\$729,000	\$500,000	\$705,924
Be recognised by Reconciliation Australia for the CQUniversity Reconciliation Action Plan.	Due 2022	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Achieve	Achieved
Expand our presence by partnering with and supporting new study centres (Regional University Centre) in under-serviced Australian communities.	12 RUC partner locations	Maintain 7 RUC partner locations	1 (8 RUC partner locations in total)	3	4 (12 RUC partner locations in total)	1	6 (18 RUC partner locations in total)	1	5 (23 RUC partner locations in total)
Establish two international joint partnerships.	1	N/A	N/A	1	PT CQU Executive Business Training Centre, Indonesia	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

KPI	2023 TARGET	2019		2020		2021		2022	
		TARGET	ACTUAL	TARGET	ACTUAL	TARGET	ACTUAL	TARGET	ACTUAL
Achieve renewed accreditation as a Changemaker University with Ashoka U.	Maintain	Maintain	Maintained	Achieve	Achieved	Maintain	Maintained	Maintain	Maintained
Achieve an increase in other external income.	\$20m	\$20m	\$35m	\$20m	\$21.782m	\$20m	\$1.3m	\$20m	\$74m
Achieve accreditation into the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification Framework.	KPI Withdrawn	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	KPI Withdrawn	N/A KPI Withdrawn
Achieve an increase in philanthropic income.	\$4.6m	\$3.4	\$4.595m	\$2.5m	\$4.646m	\$3m	\$4.152m	\$4.4m	\$6.3m
EBITDA target.	10%	6.3%	11.76%	1.5%	5.13%	5%	6.15%	4.81%	5.75%
Current Ratio.	>1.0	1.5	1.2	>1.0	1.38	>1.0	1.56 (w/ NAIF funds)	1.61	1.4 (w/ NAIF funds)
Reduce energy usage across the university.	20%	9%	11.36%	9.5%	36%	13%	35%	16.5%	35%
Maintain Research Higher Degree Scholarship places.	N/A	N/A	N/A	20 places	29 places	20 places	32 places	N/A	17 places
Increase total media hits across all channels.	N/A	N/A	N/A	+3.3%	-11.6%	+3.3%	4.81%	Baseline	22% (note baseline re-established)
Achieve and maintain Social Traders certification.	Maintain	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Achieve	Achieved
Maintain a Field Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI) indicator score.	1.8	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.8

RISK ISSUES

LEARNING AND TEACHING

- » Graduate attributes or competencies may not be relevant to the future needs of the industry/ employer.
- » Delivery of education products may not meet the student expectations of flexibility and innovative technology platforms, including staff expectations.
- » Access and participation in education and training may be restricted due to educational design and delivery.
- » Work-integrated learning opportunities may not provide the desired student outcomes.
- » Graduates may not re-engage and may consider alternative education providers for career upskilling.
- » Delivering financially unsustainable courses that may not generate income.
- » Course accreditation and compliance requirements may restrict learning and teaching innovation.
- » Demand on corporate training may exceed capacity to develop product and deliver professional education to industry.
- » Industry disengages and may consider alternative education providers for their training needs.
- » Academic integrity implications.

RESEARCH

- » Lack of research capacity may result in missed research opportunities.
- » Potential lack of industry or diversified industry in the regions to partner with in research or provide RHD opportunities.
- » Potential lack of supervisor capacity to support RHD growth.
- » Potential lack of external funding to invest in research or support RHD growth.
- » Potential time constraints on senior academics with the right backgrounds to participate in research.
- » The opportunity costs if we don't commit to new research endeavours that reflects the societal needs.
- » Inability to expand international research partnerships due to the potential lack of research capacity.
- » Inability to grow international RHD supervision due to lack of investment.
- » Inability to meet TEQSA research requirements for university status.
- » Research outputs may not translate to commercial opportunities.

PLACES

- » The large campus footprint, coupled with ageing assets is a significant financial load to maintain.
- » Underutilised assets are not maximising returns or benefit to the University or local community.
- » Potential inability to deliver campus facilities that are suitable to the learning needs of the student or the future workforce, including accessibility.
- » Digital platforms may lack the relevance and sophistication expected by students or become outdated due to the speed of change in digital advancements.
- » External funding to invest in campus consolidation, rationalisation or new assets that are more suitable to today's student may not be secured.
- » Return on investing in assets may not be realised due to overcapitalising or community expectations are not met.
- » Volatile building industry may lead to pricing escalations, supply chain issues, or contractor unavailability.
- » Cybersecurity.
- » Potential inability to build stakeholder relationships in Indonesia to progress the Jakarta campus.
- » Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) initiatives may not achieve the intended impact towards meaningful Indigenous engagement outcomes.
- » The impact of inflation on our communities, and the ability to secure accommodation and access essential services.

PEOPLE

- » The workforce model may not support the strategy.
- » Culture may not be conducive to a high-performing, customer-centric institution.
- » Inability to attract and retain the right talent or the culture may not be attractive to prospective employees.
- » Inability to diversify workforce as organisational practices may not support inclusion (overrepresented).
- » Performance management may be inconsistent across the University or may not contribute to achieving the overall vision.
- » Resourcing constraints may contribute to high workloads leading to staff disengagement or burnout.
- » Health, safety and wellbeing initiatives may be ineffective, or the culture may be absent.
- » The Tiered Student Support Model (CQURenew) may not achieve its intended remit, may not be mapped to the student lifecycle, or structures may hinder its ability to operate effectively and efficiently.
- » The College Model may not support the student learning journey.
- » Student expectations of tertiary education and the student experience may not be well articulated.
- » At-risk students may not be identified and supported.
- » High rates of students within their first year of study leave.
- » Overall, student attrition increases.

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STRATEGIC PLAN
2024 - 2028

WE CHANGE LIVES



BE WHAT **YOU** WANT TO BE
cqu.edu.au

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At CQUniversity, we acknowledge the lands upon which we work and learn have been under the custodianship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for many thousands of years. Importantly, we recognise that in the history of Australia, the diverse land and sea Country of First Nations peoples has never been ceded.

We respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for their deep ongoing connection to Country, and for their dedication to the sustainability of their cultures, environments and communities. We recognise the unique place they hold as our nation's first educators and innovators, and the cycles of traditional knowledge transfer that has continued for millennia.

We walk in solidarity with First Nations peoples, recognising our shared history in anticipation of a shared future. As a university, we participate in shaping this common future, through truth-telling and mutual understanding to attain empowerment and equity for all.

FOREWORD FROM THE CHANCELLOR AND VICE-CHANCELLOR



As Chancellor of CQUniversity, I am proud to present the Strategic Plan 2024-2028 to our students, our staff and to the communities we seek to serve.

I have been struck by how invested the CQUniversity community has been in the shared construction of this strategic plan. Our staff, students and valued stakeholders have contributed considerable time and attention in co-designing the strategic intent of CQUniversity, and they should rightfully feel ownership of this plan and the future of their university.

I believe this strategic plan authentically captures CQUniversity's unique place in the higher education and training ecosystem. In doing so, it provides the strategic framework for us to meet our distinct social licence: to be Australia's most accessible and supportive university, connecting our regions to the world through innovative education, training and research excellence.

This strategic plan preserves an enduring set of values that were in place long before I became Chancellor, and will undoubtedly remain long after I'm gone. The new strategic plan now more accurately defines our unique purpose and vision, recalibrates our strategic goals and priorities, and importantly, puts forward a more holistic framework of pillars that reflects the interconnectivity of our social impact: our People, our Planet, and our Partnerships.

While this strategic plan is forward-looking in its gaze, embracing the range of disruptions, challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, it retains strong links to this university's proud identity and its history. This plan reaffirms CQUniversity's commitment to Reconciliation, truth-telling, and in walking alongside First Nations peoples. It upholds the heart of our university in regional Australia, with a continuing focus on community engagement. It fortifies our philosophy of inclusion, accessibility and opportunity for all. It recognises our staff are central to all that we do. And, perhaps most importantly, it supports our tremendous capabilities in world class teaching, training and research.

I am humbled by the level of involvement shown by our university community in the development of this important document, and I look forward to working with you over coming years as we translate this strategic plan into social impact for the betterment of our People, our Partners, and our Planet.

Graeme Innes AM
Chancellor, CQUniversity Australia



It has been a privilege to work alongside our staff, our students and our many stakeholders to develop a strategic plan for CQUniversity that is truly reflective of who we are and where we are going.

This is a strategic plan that is fit-for-purpose for the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead for CQUniversity. I say this with confidence, knowing that our previous strategic plan weathered us through the most unexpected, prolonged and consequential disruption in CQUniversity's history – the global COVID pandemic. This extraordinary event affected every student, staff member, campus, and aspect of our business in ways and severities that were simply unimaginable when our previous strategic plan was developed in 2019. But rather than rendering that plan obsolete, COVID revealed that our strategic intent – our purpose, vision, values and pillars – was more important than ever.

Our previous strategic plan trained our focus upon who we were, and what we needed to be, as we navigated our way through the crisis. That's what a good strategic plan does, and that is precisely what our next strategic plan seeks to further enhance. The CQUniversity Strategic Plan 2024-2028 anchors our purpose, sharpens our vision, fortifies our values, and provides us with the agility we need in good times, and the stability we need in challenging times.

I am proud to be the Vice-Chancellor of a university that has such a powerful identity and purpose, not just as a world-class training, teaching and research institution, but as an agent of profound change within the communities we serve. It takes a highly specialised set of values, and a distinctly articulated strategic intent, to achieve the levels of inclusivity, accessibility and impact required by our diverse student cohorts and communities. Each of us should take confidence in the fact that this strategic plan provides CQUniversity with the clarity of vision and purpose to meet the distinct needs of our students and communities.

I thank everybody who took the time and attention to shape this new strategic plan. The sheer number of people that care so deeply about CQUniversity's future is an amazing reflection of the importance that this university has in the lives of so many. Each of us has a role to play in the realisation of this strategic plan over coming years, and I look forward to sharing this important journey with you and the entire CQUniversity community.

Professor Nick Klomp
Vice-Chancellor and President, CQUniversity Australia



OUR PURPOSE

To provide world-class, inclusive education, training and research opportunities to our students, partners and communities across Australia and internationally.

OUR VISION

To be Australia's most accessible and supportive university, connecting our regions to the world through innovative education, training and research excellence.

OUR VALUES

Our values reflect what we believe and guide our actions to achieve our purpose and vision.

ENGAGEMENT

We recognise that authentic engagement with our communities, industries, stakeholders, and students is an inseparable feature of our social purpose.

CAN DO

We have the skills, vision, and courage to achieve anything. We support one another to seize opportunities and overcome challenges.

OPENNESS

As individuals and as a university, we build trust by acting with integrity and embracing open and honest dialogue.

LEADERSHIP

We value leadership as a quality embedded within every role at CQUniversity, and recognise that initiative, collaboration, accountability, and daring to be different define our success as leaders.

INCLUSIVENESS

We value accessible education and training as an undeniable human right afforded to any person who aspires to it, anchored by a shared sense of equity, kindness, and humanity.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE 2019



STUDENT SATISFACTION

We have increased our overall VET graduate satisfaction result by 4.4% since 2019.



REDUCED ENERGY CONSUMPTION

We've reduced our energy usage by 35% across the university.



GROWING RHD STUDENT LOAD

We have increased our overall Research Higher Degree student load by nearly 50% since 2019.



RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

We proudly launched our Reconciliation Action Plan, that has been recognised by Reconciliation Australia.



INCREASED STUDENT RETENTION RATES

We have increased our domestic undergraduate student retention rates by more than 2% since 2019.



INCREASED PRESENCE ACROSS AUSTRALIA

We have expanded our presence and now partner with 26 study centres in under-serviced Australian communities.



GROWING OUR STAFF CAPABILITY

More than 77% of our staff hold tertiary qualifications, exceeding our target by 2%.



INCREASED EXTERNAL INCOME

We have secured \$132 million in external income since 2019.

OUR CULTURE OF SUSTAINABILITY

We will continue our commitment to be Australia's most engaged university, supporting the development of global sustainability through our partnerships with the communities we serve.

As an agent of profound social impact, CQUniversity recognises the role it must play in the collective global pursuance of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We embrace the 17 SDGs and acknowledge that it is well within our capabilities and our values to work towards the creation of a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable future for all.

The development of the CQUniversity Strategic Plan 2024-2028 was influenced by the opportunities we create to contribute to the SDGs through innovative teaching, training and research excellence. Through our values-based approach to our People, our Planet and our Partnerships, we not only shape our own future as an institution, but that of a more equitable, sustainable and just world around us.

1 NO POVERTY



2 ZERO HUNGER



3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



4 QUALITY EDUCATION



5 GENDER EQUALITY



6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



13 CLIMATE ACTION



14 LIFE BELOW WATER



15 LIFE ON LAND



16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPOSITION



The overall direction of our strategy builds on the achievements of our previous Strategic Plan 2019-2023, *Our Future is You*.

We have sharpened our vision and refined our pillars, goals and priorities to reflect our focus towards genuine accessibility, collaboration and connectedness across education, training and research.

The CQUniversity Strategic Plan 2024-2028, *We Change Lives*, is organised by pillars that capture the purpose and vision of the University. Under each of the pillars are strategic goals that identify the outcomes to be achieved. The plan also documents the strategic priorities that will be undertaken to achieve these goals, along with the strategic measures that will monitor our progress.

PURPOSE, VISION AND VALUES

PURPOSE

Our purpose is enduring and defines why we exist.

VISION

Our vision guides our strategic plan and defines what we want to be in the future.

VALUES: ENGAGEMENT, CAN DO, OPENNESS, LEADERSHIP AND INCLUSIVENESS

Our values reflect what we believe and guide our actions to achieve our purpose and vision.

FOUNDATIONAL

PILLARS

Pillars capture the purpose and vision of CQUniversity.

PEOPLE

PLANET

PARTNERSHIPS

STRATEGIC GOALS FOCUS AREAS

Strategic goals define how we will achieve our vision.

STUDENTS STAFF SOCIETY

SUSTAINABILITY PLACE AND PRESENCE RESEARCH

FIRST NATIONS COMMITMENT STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS REGIONAL COMMITMENT GLOBAL REACH

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Strategic priorities are the key projects, programs and pursuits that we will undertake to achieve our strategic goals.

- » Access and Participation Assurance
- » Future Leaders
- » Augmented Online
- » Corporate Training Solutions
- » Student Experience Lifecycle
- » Professional Development
- » Contemporary Work Model
- » Service Excellence Culture

- » Sustainability Framework
- » Optimising the Business Model
- » Campuses of the Future
- » Societal Needs Aligned Research
- » World-Standard Research Portfolio

- » Reconciliation Action Plan
- » International Research Partnerships and Reputation
- » Lifetime Career Partnership
- » Engagement Blueprint
- » Global Operations

MEASURES

Measures quantify progress and are used to objectively assess the attainment of our goals.

1. Student retention and satisfaction
2. Staff retention and satisfaction

3. Reduction in carbon emissions
4. Underlying operating surplus

5. Reconciliation Action Plan
6. Local and global research partnerships

STRATEGIC PLAN



PEOPLE

Our people are our purpose, and their success is our legacy. We recognise that we need to create transformative life opportunities through fostering the talents and enhancing the potential of our students, staff, alumni, and communities.

We are committed to creating an environment of lifelong learning where people feel empowered and proud to learn, work and grow with CQUniversity. We will be leaders in providing innovative, accessible, supportive and flexible learning, engaged workplaces and enriched societies.

ALIGNED WITH THE FOLLOWING UNSDGs





At CQUniversity, we celebrate the incredible diversity of backgrounds, cultures, abilities, perspectives, and talents found amongst our staff. We recognise that this enables us to support the same rich diversity found within our student cohorts and communities as well.

PEOPLE

The strategic goals underpinning this pillar are:

STUDENTS

1.1 Access and Participation: Provide opportunity for all students, no matter where they are, to access high quality education and training that supports their unique needs and wellbeing.

1.2 Innovative Learning Experiences: Deliver vocational to doctoral education, bespoke training, and microcredentials for students and industry partners, through self-paced, flexible and digital learning options that meet the diverse needs of our learners, creating accessible entry points and clear progression pathways.

1.3 Career Readiness: Provide a curriculum that is informed by world-class research, market intelligence and co-created with our industry partners, embedded with authentic work-based learning opportunities, and driven by relevance to the needs of our students and employers, so they can confidently meet the challenges of the future.

STAFF

1.4 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Create an environment that brings out the best in our staff, strengthened by a culture of equality, inclusion, flexibility and innovation so our staff are inspired to achieve and excel, and so they are held in the highest regard nationally and globally.

1.5 Healthy Work Environment: Ensure a safe and healthy work environment with a focus on personal and professional growth, wellbeing, and work-life balance, where values-driven behaviour is exemplified.

1.6 Service Excellence: Foster a service excellence culture that is underpinned by evidence-based, 'no-blame' real-time feedback and where continuous improvement is actively embraced to ensure our structures, processes and practices empower our vision.

SOCIETY

1.7 Alumni and Industry Networks: Connect and work with industry and our alumni to create, maintain and showcase a sense of belonging to the wider CQUniversity community.

1.8 Lifelong Learning: Respond to the needs of our communities, industry and wider society with targeted and relevant lifelong learning opportunities to enhance societal potential and research impact.

1.9 Social Innovation: Uphold the principles of social innovation within all aspects of our operations to support our students, staff, research, and the communities we serve to achieve positive social outcomes.





CQUNIVERSITY LEADS ON GENDER EQUITY

The importance that this strategic plan places upon our **People** recognises that our students, staff and alumni are the living extensions of our values, vision, purpose and ultimately our impact as a university. We transform lives by fostering the talents and enhancing the potential of our people. In doing so, we seek to represent the incredible diversity of the communities that we serve through our inclusive student cohorts and our broad staff profiles. As such, CQUniversity is proud to be recognised by the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings as the 12th best university in the world, and the leading university in Queensland, for gender equity.

These results demonstrate CQUniversity's commitment to equity of employment opportunity and, importantly, to the University's core value of inclusiveness. The gender equity category focuses on a university's research on the study of gender equality, its policies on gender equality, and its commitment to recruiting and promoting women. Employment data from CQUniversity reveals a majority of total staff numbers and leadership positions at the University are held by women. We are proud of the focus that this strategic plan places on access and equity for all staff, students and partners.

PLANET

Our planet is in our hands. We recognise that we need to contribute positively to our world by embedding sustainability, enhancing our digital and physical campus footprint, and driving research and innovation to address the challenges of our time.

We are committed to advancing our stewardship to ensure a sustainable future for the University and, in turn, build sustainable regions through our presence and research that aligns with societal needs. We are focused on striking the right balance with our investment decisions to ensure a positive impact on the planet.



ALIGNED WITH THE FOLLOWING UNSDGs





Whether it's through the research that we drive, the graduates that we produce, or the global workforces that we shape, our ability to influence the sustainability of our communities has a profound intergenerational impact.



The strategic goals underpinning this pillar are:

SUSTAINABILITY

2.1 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Uphold sustainability practices that remain in favour of a healthy planet at every opportunity and ensure the results of our decisions are socially responsible and are removed of any injustice.

2.2 Sustainability Knowledge and Practice: Embed the principles of sustainability into our education, training and research to drive a consciousness and understanding of sustainability.

2.3 Financial Sustainability: Optimise the University's business model to ensure our financial security and our ability to be agile and responsive in times of disruption.

PLACE AND PRESENCE

2.4 Campus Optimisation: Balance our physical and digital campuses and create a technology-enabled university that fosters an environment for discovery, creativity, connection and wellbeing – an environment that continues to preserve the student experience as our centrepiece through modernised operations.

2.5 Co-location and Collaboration: Open our campuses to industry, employers, community partners, start-ups and commercial operators to co-locate and establish embedded relationships that provide mutual benefits.

2.6 Presence and Reach: Embody our commitment to accessibility and opportunity by strengthening our partnerships with regional university centres, enabling us to expand our reach and enhance student access.

RESEARCH

2.7 Research Impact: Be the central hub for research in our regions by addressing the issues that matter most, cementing our unique power of place by undertaking research in practical and sustainable solutions, with national and international impact.

2.8 Researcher Training and Development: Support researchers who push the limits of current knowledge and share their research expertise and outcomes to improve productivity, prosperity, quality of life and global sustainability.

2.9 Entrepreneurialism: Deepen our entrepreneurial collaborations to encourage innovation and produce new technologies, new products and new businesses.





LIVING SEAWALL ENHANCES COASTAL HABITAT

Our contribution to the sustainability of the world around us is a fundamental aspect of this strategic plan – our **Planet** – and informs our approach to innovative education, training and research excellence. We help shape the social, cultural, economic and environmental sustainability of our communities through many different activities, such as our ‘living seawall’ applied research project in the coastal habitats of regional Queensland. The project is a partnership between CQUniversity and Gladstone Ports Corporation (GPC) designed to demonstrate how a sustainable ‘working with nature’ approach to coastal engineering projects can provide better outcomes for coastal habitats.

Traditional seawalls do not provide much habitat, and often replace important, natural habitats. A living seawall, however, has additional design considerations that provide natural habitat for key ecosystem species, such as mangroves, oysters, seagrasses, fish, and marine invertebrates. If these same development projects can occur in a way that creates habitat, while still achieving engineering objectives, CQUniversity can help mitigate habitat loss and re-establish important ecosystem services provided by critical coastal environments.

As part of the project, GPC built a trial, living seawall site using CQUniversity designs. The site allows CQUniversity researchers to examine different methods of creating mangrove and oyster habitat along existing rock seawalls. The project is directed at solving the issue of habitat enhancement and scaling up, in a cooperative and achievable way, by working with industry partners.

PARTNERSHIPS

Our success as a university relies on our engagement and collaboration with our partners. We recognise that we need to actively connect and collaborate to share knowledge and ideas that drive impact with mutual and wider benefit from our regions to the world.

We are committed to making a brighter future through drive and imagination in close partnership with our communities and stakeholders. We recognise and value our partners and actively develop our partnerships for the benefit of all.

ALIGNED WITH THE FOLLOWING UNSDGs





At CQUniversity, we understand that partnerships built upon shared values and purpose matter to the communities we serve. True engagement with the shared challenges and opportunities of our partners only ever multiplies the social impact we generate as a university.

PARTNERSHIPS

The strategic goals underpinning this pillar are:

FIRST NATIONS COMMITMENT

3.1 First Nations Voice: Collaborate with Australia's First Nations peoples to strengthen our relationships with the custodians of the lands hosting the communities we serve, and work together with communities, government, and First Nations organisations to address injustice and provide equality of opportunity.

3.2 First Nations Success: Increase access to education, training and research for our First Nations peoples and provide the support systems for success.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

3.3 Engaged Research: Collaborate with government, industry and community partners on research projects that matter to our regions and convert knowledge into tangible outcomes.

3.4 Alumni and Industry Partners: Engage and leverage our alumni and industry connections to create enduring relationships and opportunities.

3.5 Philanthropy Partners: Grow the culture of philanthropy across individual donors and social and corporate partners to enhance opportunities for our students and communities.

REGIONAL COMMITMENT

3.6 Create Aspiration: Enhance our commitment to schools-outreach and widening regional participation in education, training and employment.

3.7 Regional Impact: Be civic-minded and collaborative with government, industry and community in considering regional needs, seizing opportunities that deliver meaningful benefit for our local communities and industry.

GLOBAL REACH

3.8 International Partnerships: Collaborate with key international partners to expand our global reach, grow our international student diversity, gain access to international best practice and enhance our education and training capabilities.

3.9 International Research Collaborations: Develop a suite of international partnerships in key regions critical for research.

3.10 Global Exposure: Increase student access to international mobility opportunities, inward and outward, that encourages them to be global citizens and responsible leaders.





U-BEACH GIVES ACCESS TO ALL

Our **Partnerships** are vital to framing our social impact as a university. This strategic plan recognises the importance of developing and strengthening partnerships with our communities to deliver projects that not only change lives, but demonstrate our focus on access and inclusion. One such project is the U-BEACH Community Beach day, a CQUniversity-led community partnership providing beach access and supportive activities for all people and abilities in Bundaberg. Led by CQU Bundaberg physiotherapy lecturer Sasha Job, the inaugural U-BEACH Community Beach day saw 250 individuals from the community participate in the inclusive event, many of whom have lacked the social, physical, or technical support to enjoy the beach for many years. The initiative is based upon research revealing that in the Bundaberg region, one in five people have a disability, with half of those unable to access the beach for recreation.

To overcome these accessibility concerns, attendees utilised Mobi-Mat beach walkway, beach walkers and beach wheelchairs, alongside assistance from volunteers who coordinated wheelchair transfers, mobility and beach activities.

Led by CQUniversity, U-BEACH is delivered in partnership with Bundaberg Regional Council, Bundaberg Surf Lifesaving, IMPACT Community Services, and Rotary Bundaberg Region, as well as local education providers, disability support services, allied health organisations and sporting clubs. The collaborative event brought together CQU physiotherapy and occupational therapy experts and students, as well as community supporters to facilitate beach access and activities.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Our strategic priorities are our key projects, programs and pursuits that we will undertake to achieve our strategic goals.

These priorities have been derived from the University's purpose, vision and overall strategic direction and, upon implementation, will reflect the success of this plan. It is within these strategic priorities that our collective efforts will be concentrated. These priorities will be reviewed annually to reflect new developments and the latest prioritisation of our efforts.

MEASURING OUR SUCCESS

The commitment to measuring progress and regularly reporting back to the University community ensures a transparent and accountable approach to achieving the University's strategic goals. However, we recognise that measuring the success of innovative initiatives and long-term projects can be challenging. Therefore, the measures outlined will serve as the foundation of our strategic measures, allowing us to develop creative and tailored ways to measure success that aligns with the intent of the specific goals and the nature of our priorities.

Targets will be considered and approved by Council on an annual basis. Performance against these measures will be reviewed throughout the year and reported to Council to monitor progress.





PILLAR 1

PEOPLE



PRIORITIES

Access and Participation Assurance: A university-wide assessment of our current performance on access, progression and student success in order to remove barriers to CQUniversity.

STRATEGIC GOAL ALIGNMENT 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.8; 1.9; 3.2; 3.6; 3.10

Future Leaders: A program focused on relevant, innovative education and training products and delivery options to support the individual learner, tailored for our students and staff.

STRATEGIC GOAL ALIGNMENT 1.2; 1.5; 1.7; 1.8; 1.9; 2.2

Augmented Online: To cement our leadership in augmented online delivery and enhance the delivery options to ensure equitable access to education and training, regardless of geographic location or circumstance.

STRATEGIC GOAL ALIGNMENT 1.1; 1.2; 1.8

Corporate Training Solutions: A business development hub focused on industry training needs through targeted training products and delivery.

STRATEGIC GOAL ALIGNMENT 1.2; 1.3; 1.7; 1.8

Student Experience Lifecycle: Alignment of our academic and personal supports at every stage of the student lifecycle, from pre-enrolment through to graduation and beyond.

STRATEGIC GOAL ALIGNMENT 1.1; 1.7; 1.8; 1.9

Professional Development: To provide opportunities for career enhancement and ongoing development that encourages our staff to continually improve and build their growth and promotional prospects.

STRATEGIC GOAL ALIGNMENT 1.4; 1.5; 1.6

Contemporary Work Model: Development of a work model that supports the modern workplace, the individual and the priorities of the University.

STRATEGIC GOAL ALIGNMENT 1.4; 1.5; 1.6

Service Excellence Culture: To grow a values-driven customer-centric culture focused on data-driven reflection, real-time 'no-blame' feedback, continuous improvement and service excellence.

STRATEGIC GOAL ALIGNMENT 1.4; 1.5; 1.6



MEASURE OF SUCCESS

STUDENT RETENTION AND SATISFACTION

CQUniversity will measure the overall student retention rate across all higher education student cohorts and will use the government data and definition of retention to inform the calculation of this measure.

CQUniversity will track unit completion rates across all vocational education and training student cohorts.

We will measure our student satisfaction levels through the published Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) data for our higher education student cohorts and the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) data for our vocational education and training student cohorts.

We will establish and monitor real-time student feedback systems to allow for immediate responses as appropriate.

STAFF RETENTION AND SATISFACTION

CQUniversity will measure the overall staff retention rates across continuing staffing cohorts based on resignations, and will undertake an annual in-house temperature check on staffing satisfaction levels.

BREAKING GENDER BARRIERS TO TRADITIONAL INDUSTRIES

At the core of CQUniversity's strategic intent is the universal provision of inclusive, accessible and supportive opportunities for any student who aspires to it. This philosophy is enabled by our people, and reinforced by our purpose, our vision, and our values.

For 18-year-old VET student Grace Macqueen, this means a career in the highly competitive and male dominated trade of boiler making is not just a possibility, but a reality. Grace's first steps towards her career aspirations within the industries of regional Queensland began during her senior years at high school in Mackay, where she undertook a Certificate II in Engineering Pathways as part of CQUniversity's Start TAFE Now program.

Grace credits the highly supportive training and experience she gained with CQUniversity for enabling a foothold within her industry, which has seen her commence an apprenticeship with a Mackay-based company, with her block training occurring at CQUniversity's world class Ooralea campus facilities. For Grace, the support that she's received, and the career opportunities that have opened for her, has led her to encourage other young women considering a trade to follow their passions, regardless of the barriers.



PILLAR 2

PLANET



PRIORITIES

Sustainability Framework: A whole-of-university program focused on supporting the development of global sustainability that contributes to positive environmental and social impact.

STRATEGIC GOAL ALIGNMENT 2.1; 2.2

Optimising the Business Model: To advance a business model that supports the changing needs of the University and our students and contributes to service excellence and financial prosperity.

STRATEGIC GOAL ALIGNMENT 2.3

Campuses of the Future: Reimagining our physical and digital campuses as connected community precincts to create a vibrant experience accessible to all on a sustainable footprint.

STRATEGIC GOAL ALIGNMENT 2.4; 2.5; 2.6

Societal Needs Aligned Research: A program of future-shaping research aligned to societal needs, including artificial intelligence, regional workforce, public health, clean energy and sustainability.

STRATEGIC GOAL ALIGNMENT 2.2; 2.7; 2.8; 2.9; 3.3

World-Standard Research Portfolio: To drive a portfolio of research at or above world standard benchmarks and aligning our research to the advantage of our place.

STRATEGIC GOAL ALIGNMENT 2.2; 2.7; 2.8; 2.9; 3.3



MEASURE OF SUCCESS

REDUCTION IN CARBON EMISSIONS

CQUniversity will measure our reduction in carbon emissions by establishing a baseline and implementing systems and processes to monitor and report emissions, to ensure reductions are in line with the Australian Government target of net zero by 2050.

UNDERLYING OPERATING SURPLUS

CQUniversity will measure its underlying operating result, defined as revenue less expenses and after abnormal items, in order to ensure the University is financially sustainable by the end of the strategic plan timeframe, as demonstrated by sustainable underlying surpluses.

SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS TO CQU ENERGY AND LANDFILL

CQUniversity recognises the strong role it must play in ensuring the sustainability of our planet. We achieve this outwardly via the attuned workforces we develop, and the applied research we lead. But our commitment also relies upon our own internal innovations and sustainability measures, such as how we manage our waste and how we mitigate our carbon footprint as a university.

Today, half of the energy used by our campuses is derived from renewable sources, which means far less carbon entering our atmosphere, and more investment being made in the renewables market.

We are also innovating our waste management solutions. For instance, CQUniversity's Capricornia College has established circular waste economy partnerships with local businesses. In a single year, approximately 2.4 tonnes of waste from CQUniversity's catering facilities are saved from landfill by a waste collection initiative that sends food scraps and leftovers to community partners who reuse the university's waste products as part of their production cycle. For example, food waste collection initiatives redirect organic vegetable scraps to a local permaculture farm where it is used for animal feed and compost. Meanwhile, a partnership with Koorana Crocodile Farm sees food processing by-products, otherwise destined for landfill, diverted to feed stock for commercial crocodile farming.

As a result of our focus on sustainable practices, CQUniversity has been able to significantly reduce its CO2 emissions, apply proactive action towards sustainability, and promote activities and partnerships that support circular 'green economy' outcomes.



PILLAR 3

PARTNERSHIPS



PRIORITIES

Reconciliation Action Plan: Our commitment to addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters, and embodying reconciliation will be closely monitored through the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

STRATEGIC GOAL ALIGNMENT 3.1; 3.2

International Research Partnerships and Reputation:

A program focused on building international research partnerships in Indonesia (and broader South-East Asia) and India.

STRATEGIC GOAL ALIGNMENT 3.9

Lifetime Career Partnership: Deliver an expanded offering of alumni benefits to support CQUniversity alumni across all stages of their career, including further study and upskilling.

STRATEGIC GOAL ALIGNMENT 1.7; 1.8; 3.4

Engagement Blueprint: To drive a unified and consistent approach to CQUniversity's community and political advocacy, including philanthropic activities and alumni relations, to advance positive outcomes for our students, staff and communities.

STRATEGIC GOAL ALIGNMENT 3.4; 3.5; 3.7

Global Operations: To strengthen our global strategic partnerships and grow our presence, reach and impact internationally.

STRATEGIC GOAL ALIGNMENT 3.8; 3.10



MEASURE OF SUCCESS

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

CQUniversity will measure its success towards its First Nations Commitment strategic goals through the delivery of initiatives in our Reconciliation Action Plan – and future plans.

LOCAL AND GLOBAL RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

CQUniversity will measure the ratio of successful and expanding research partnerships against dormant and declining partnerships, for both international and domestic partners.

CQUNIVERSITY JAWUN RESEARCH CENTRE

CQUniversity is committed to walking in solidarity with First Nations peoples, having accepted their invitation to share the journey towards realising the powerful aspirations of the Uluru Statement of the Heart.

Our partnership with First Nations people and communities is reflected in this strategic plan as a major priority and a fundamental aspect of who we are as a university. We seek to build this partnership through every aspect of our impact, including our research focus.

The CQUniversity Jawun Research Centre is a flagship for Indigenous health and wellbeing research. It conducts high-impact applied research to support First Nations communities and organisations and improve community wellbeing through Indigenous self-determination.

The Jawun Research Centre sets a pioneering agenda for change by nurturing research that is meaningful and directly relevant to the lives of Indigenous people. Social justice principles of Indigenous sovereignty, engagement, leadership, priority setting and nation building underpin Jawun Research Centre's management.

The Jawun Research Centre capabilities are in community-driven wellbeing research, systems thinking, public health and disaster management research, impact assessment and evaluation, linguistics and translation/advocacy.

Jawun Research Centre offers opportunities in research capacity strengthening and education to build the next generation of researchers.





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1 September 2023

Dear Accord Expert Panel,

We write to express our concerns regarding the proposed National Regional University (NRU) model suggested in the Australian Universities Accord Interim Report. While we acknowledge the importance of exploring innovative approaches to higher education in regional, rural, and remote Australia, we feel compelled to highlight a number of concerns.

Firstly, it is crucial to recognise that the National Regional University model and similar models are not new concepts and have been previously discarded for valid reasons. Such models may be more appropriate for a metropolitan setting but would not be welcomed by the regions.

Regions greatly value and are rightly proud of their universities. Institutions such as CQUniversity are intrinsically tied to the identity of our community through a bond formed over many years.

We fully support the Panel's call to drive greater equity for our students and to reduce the barriers of space and distance. As the Accord Panel examines the sustainable delivery of higher education in regional, rural and remote Australia, it must be done through the lens of those that call these regions home. It is vital that any changes do not adversely impact our regional identity.

Local universities must continue to be seen as part of our local community if we are to attract and retain the students needed to meet our future workforce requirements. At the same time, we need to ensure any potential outcome does not result in the centralisation of services that would result in job losses in regional areas. Universities are a major employer in the regions and the loss of staff would have a devastating impact on local economies and further deterioration of our skilled workforce.

Additionally, any suggestion that restricts research by our regional universities through potential specialisation approaches would not be supported. The implications of regional universities specialising to a lesser extent in research would have dire consequences on regional communities, industries, and overall prosperity. It is crucial to conduct research within our regions, not just to our regions, to ensure regional development and growth.

Given the urgent need to grow our skilled workforce and build regional opportunities, we would encourage the panel to focus on addressing the funding and policy limitations that hinder the effective operation of a regional university rather than the distraction of the NRU proposal.

Regards,



Enver Selita
President
Cairns Chamber of Commerce



John Abbott
Chairman
QLD Pacific Metals, Townsville



Cr Greg Williamson
Mayor
Mackay Regional Council



Steve Boxall
Chief Executive
Resource Centre of Excellence



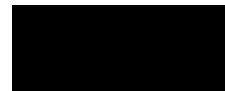
Cr Tony Williams
Mayor
Rockhampton Regional Council



Malcolm Mann
Director
Darumbal Enterprises Ltd



Mary Carroll
Chief Executive
Capricorn Enterprise Ltd



Cr Andy Ireland
Mayor
Livingstone Shire Council



Cr Matt Burnett
Mayor
Gladstone Regional Council



Cr Kerry Hayes
Mayor
Central Highlands Regional Council



Dr Kerry Blackman
Chief Executive
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Mr John Craig
A/Chief Executive Officer
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