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ANNUAL  
REPORT

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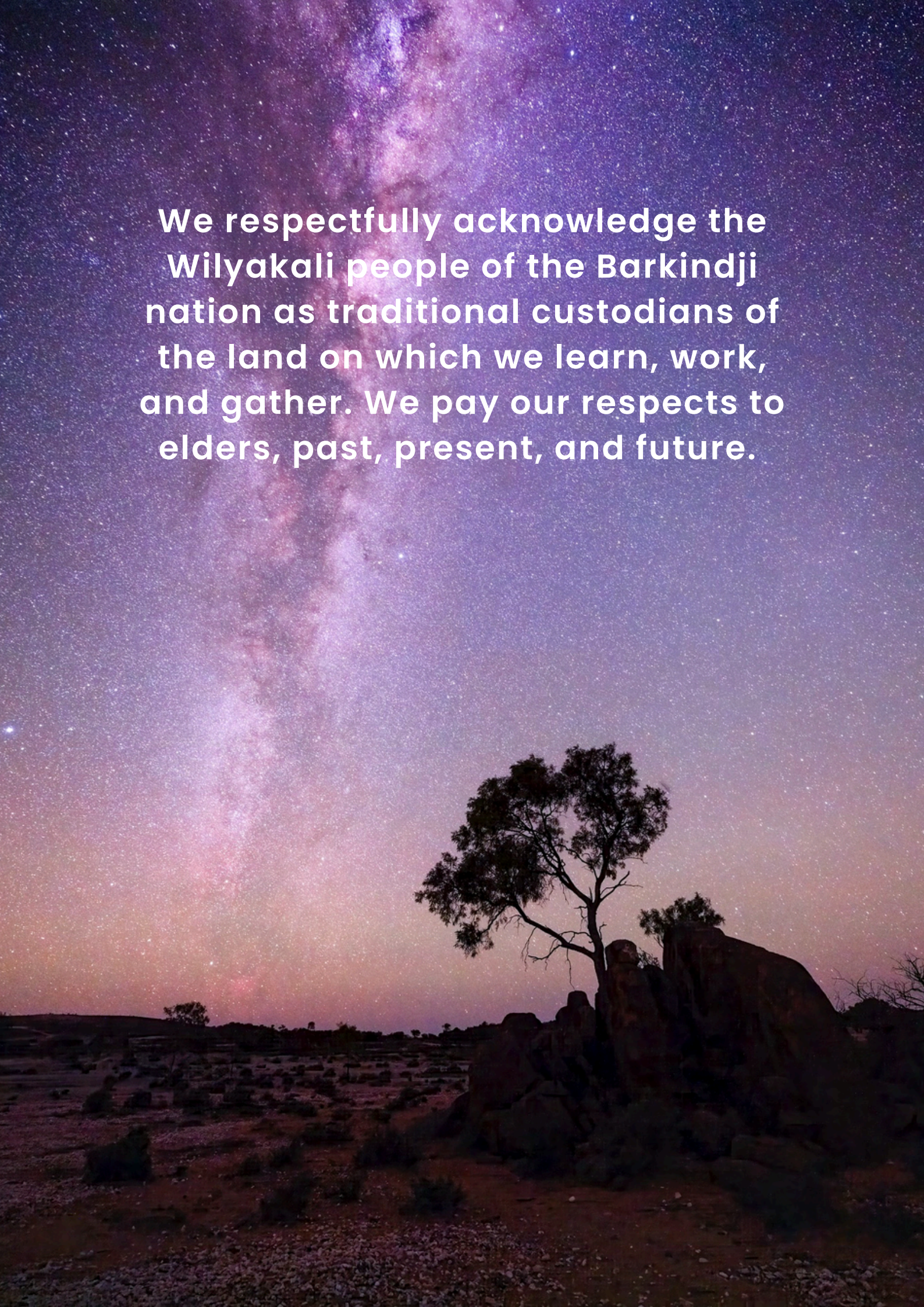
Country  
Universities  
Centre  
FAR WEST







**We respectfully acknowledge the  
Wilyakali people of the Barkindji  
nation as traditional custodians of  
the land on which we learn, work,  
and gather. We pay our respects to  
elders, past, present, and future.**









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# Message from The Chair



## Michael Williams

Chair

**Michael has been the Chair of the Board at CUC Far West since 2018. He has been instrumental in providing leadership and a clear vision to ensure continued growth and success of the organisation. He works closely with the Board to support the Centre Manager and Operational Team to continue to provide high quality and student-centred services to all community.**

This year has been one of significant milestones and continued progress for Country Universities Centre Far West. As Chair, I am proud to reflect on a year that has strengthened our Centre's position as a leading force in regional higher education.

This year we celebrated the enrolment of our 1,000th student, a remarkable achievement that highlights the growing demand for accessible tertiary education opportunities across our region. This milestone reflects not only the commitment of our students but also the collective efforts of our staff, Board, and community partners who continue to champion local learning.

We were also delighted to welcome Ryan Coulter as Centre Manager, whose leadership and enthusiasm has brought renewed focus to student engagement and community collaboration. Under Ryan's guidance, the Centre is building new partnerships and expanding programs that respond to the evolving needs of our learners.



# Message from The Chair

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This year we proudly celebrate our largest graduating class to date, a milestone that demonstrates the effectiveness of our model in supporting students to complete their studies and contribute their skills back into the local workforce and community.

Beyond supporting current students, we are also working closely with local primary and secondary schools to help young people explore career pathways, develop aspirations for higher education, and gain the confidence to pursue their goals. By strengthening our partnerships with universities, we are ensuring that local students, no matter where they live, have the opportunity to reach for the stars and realise their full potential.

As we look ahead, the Board remains committed to fostering sustainable growth, expanding our partnerships, and ensuring that the Country Universities Centre Far West continues to serve as a vibrant and supportive hub for higher education across our region.

I extend my sincere thanks to our incredible staff, Board members, university partners, and community supporters for their dedication and shared belief in our mission. Together, we are creating opportunities and transforming futures throughout the Far West.



# Centre Manager Report



**Ryan Coulter**  
Centre Manager

**Ryan was appointed the Centre Manager of CUC Far West in November 2024. He is passionate about the Far West community and works closely with universities, schools, and community partners to increase regional participation in Higher Education.**

CUC Far West continued its remarkable growth throughout 2025, reaching the significant milestone of 1000 student registrations since the Centre's inception in 2018. This figure equates to 1 in 17 local people accessing higher education without the need to leave home; a remarkable statistic that highlights the hugely positive impact the Centre has had on not just supporting locals pursue their goals but supporting the development of the workforce in Far West NSW.

In February, we held our annual Celebration of Graduation, celebrating the achievements of seventeen students graduating as part of the Class of 2024. The event was once again made possible by the incredible support of our local sponsors.

265 people registered with the Centre throughout 2025, representing a diverse range of students studying degrees in an array of different fields. The ever-popular Learning Skills Advice program continued to be offered to our student cohort, as did group workshops, regular social events and other student services. As we look ahead to 2026, we are excited to introduce a program targeting the support of individuals commencing study for the first time, plus a program that will provide an opportunity for local students to form a valuable connection with local industries.



# Centre Manager Report

In November, together with the Rotary Club of Broken Hill we launched the Higher Education Opportunity Grants, supporting students from the Far West region to pursue higher education. Two grants will be awarded annually, with one grant exclusive to CUC Far West students. We are thrilled to work with Rotary on this venture and thank them for their commitment and dedication to supporting the local community.

The Centre's widening participation initiatives continue to go from strength to strength, with 2025 marking several considerable achievements. Throughout the year, our team delivered the Dream Thinkers Far West program to over 450 years 5 and 6 students. In August, we adapted the program for online delivery, commencing delivery with School of the Air in October. The adaptation has allowed us to deliver the program to some of the most remote students in the state and highlighted the significant potential the RUSH Network has in delivering high quality and meaningful place-based widening participation initiatives.

As we reflect on the success of 2025, I would like to acknowledge the outstanding efforts of the operational team. The past year didn't come without its challenges, but your perseverance and support of our mission was unwavering. To the CUC Far West volunteer Board of Directors, thank you for your ongoing commitment to ensuring the Centre remains sustainable to meet the needs of local students both now and into the future.

Looking ahead to 2026, we are excited to continue to grow our services, initiatives and partnerships to ensure that we continue to provide opportunities for local people to reach their educational and career goals.




*The Country Universities Centre began with the establishment of the Cooma Universities Centre in 2013, created to offer enhanced, supported higher education opportunities in the regional town of Cooma, home to around 7,000 people.*

# Our story Degrees closer



*CUC Far West is a dedicated learning and study space that supports any student, studying any course, at any Australian university. Students can connect with like-minded people and engage in a learning community while they study locally. We are focused on supporting the academic success of students and ensuring they have the tools to succeed in their higher education journey.*



A woman with dark hair, wearing a green and white striped short-sleeved shirt, is sitting at a white desk. She is smiling at the camera. On the desk, there is a black computer monitor, a black keyboard, and a black mouse. To the left of the woman, there is a green plant in a decorative pot. The background shows a window with a white lattice pattern. The image is framed by orange and dark blue geometric shapes in the corners.

*"Being a CUC student means living my dream—studying locally with genuine support, strong connections, and belief in my future career."*

**Erica**  
Bachelor of Business  
Swinburne University



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

### **The Australian Government**

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The Australian Government is investing more than \$150 million to assist in the establishment and operation of community-owned, Regional University Centres at sites across regional Australia. CUC is a successful recipient of the Commonwealth's Regional University Centres Program and gratefully acknowledges the support received to date.

### **NSW Government**

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The NSW Government has supported the CUC through multiple funding grants exceeding \$18 million, which facilitated its successful expansion. The NSW Government's Higher Education Strategy focuses on increasing participation in higher education, CUC is proud to assist the government to achieve this by supporting people in our region to pursue higher education in their local community.

### **Foundation for Regional Rural and Renewal (FRRR)**

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The FRRR is supporting the CUC through its not-for-profit fundraising account.

# **Partnerships: Government & Community**

## Macquarie University

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Since 2023, CUC Far West have collaborated with Macquarie University on the delivery of the Roads to Discovery program. The program provides opportunities for local year 10 students to engage in hands-on, and interactive activities delivered by academics and staff from the university, plus local industries. In addition, Macquarie are a proud and much valued partner in the Regional Partnerships Project Pool Program, co-developing the Dream Thinkers Far West program that is now delivered regularly by our local team.

## Charles Sturt University

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Charles Sturt University collaborate with the wider CUC Network to provide valuable connections between students and the university, recognising that their students make up that largest percentage of the student cohort registered with Country Universities Centres. In addition, CSU are another proud and highly valued in the Regional Partnerships Project Pool Program, playing an integral role in the development of the Dream Thinkers Far West Program.

## The Rotary Club of Broken Hill

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In 2025, CUC Far West formed a partnership with the Rotary Club of Broken Hill to create the Higher Education Opportunity Grants, supporting students from the Far West region to pursue higher education. Two grants will be awarded annually, with one grant open to all students studying at any Australian university or registered training organisation. The second grant is exclusive to CUC Far West students. In addition to the grants, the club supports Centre operations by sponsoring our annual Celebration of Graduation, allowing us to provide a meaningful opportunity for graduates to celebrate their success with loved ones locally.

## Broken Hill Bank

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Broken Hill Bank are long time partners and supporters of CUC Far West, dating as far back as our inception in 2018. This year, we entered into a Community Partnership Agreement where 0.20% of an individual's home loan value will be donated to the Centre when they mention CUC in the sign-up process. In addition, Broken Hill Bank have proudly supported a number of our widening participation initiatives over a number of years.

# Partnerships





Country Universities Centre  
FAR WEST

Proudly funded by  
Australian Government  
Department of Education

Proudly funded by  
NSW  
GOVERNMENT

ANZAC HALL





Our community are our biggest supporters. The Centre has engaged with local industry, schools, and organisations. The success of CUC Far West depends on the support from our local community.

# Community Engagement

## Celebration of Graduation

*Celebration of Graduation was held at the Broken Hill Musician's Club on Saturday the 1<sup>st</sup> of February. A total of 17 graduates were celebrated by fellow CUC Far West students, staff and family and friends. The event emphasised the value in community sponsorship and partnership with generous support from major sponsors, including Far West Local Health District, the Rotary Club of Broken Hill, Foundation Broken Hill and the Broken Hill Musician's Club.*



## Roads to Discovery

*Roads to Discovery is a widening participation initiative delivered annually in collaboration with Macquarie University and supported by local stakeholders. In 2025, we worked Broken Hill Bank, the Broken Hill University Department of Rural Health and TAFE Broken Hill to offer a day full of hands-on and interactive activities that highlighted a diverse range of study and career pathways to over 200 year 10 students from the Far West.*

## Dream Thinkers Far West

*Over 20 different local industries, organisations and businesses from Broken Hill supported the delivery of the Dream Thinkers Far West program this year. Stakeholders from diverse industries, ranging from health, emergency services, finance and trade, inspired young people through showcasing local career and education opportunities.*



## Here For Our Students

*With the support of their local CUC regional, rural and remote students can follow their dreams when it comes to study. The CUC has responded to student needs and created an innovative model that allows choice by supporting any student, studying any course, at any Australian Tertiary Education Provider.*

*The wrap-around model of student services provides face-to-face academic, wellbeing, technology, administrative support in a learning community in addition to what each student's university already provides. These extra layers of support are crucial for many students who study with the CUC.*

*Regional students are often at greater risk of attrition. Many students are from low SES backgrounds, are the first in their family to attend university, or have caring responsibilities and multiple other commitments. The CUC offers a free, safe and welcoming environment to study with flexible and personalised face-to-face support. The CUC understand that students are individuals that need a variety of services to meet their needs so that we meet students where they are in their education journey.*

*At CUC Far West, our students are at the forefront of everything we do. Supporting our students achieve their goals is an honour and privilege, whether it be through a formal Learning Skills Advice session or a quick chat over a coffee in the kitchen, we care about helping them not just survive but thrive in their pursuits of higher education.*

# Student Services



# Student Experience Survey

## Key Findings

95%

of students felt safe and welcomed at CUC Far West



100%

said the presence of CUC Far West makes it easier for them to stay, study or work in their community

95%



said CUC Far West helps improve their academic performance



91%

said the presence of CUC Far West contributed to their wellbeing



**“Dedicated Study Areas”**

was the main reason students attended CUC Far West



*If I didn't have the support and access to the CUC, I would have withdrawn from my studies a long time ago. This service has provided a comfortable, and supportive environment for me to study. I have recommended the service to many students.*

CUC Far West Student

*Couldn't achieve my goals without them! Incredible space and even more incredible people.*

CUC Far West Student







# Year In Review

## A Time For Growth

In March this year, CUC Far West registered its 1000<sup>th</sup> student since its inception in 2018. This equates to approximately 1 in 17 locals engaging with the Centre to pursue higher education without leaving home; a remarkable statistic that highlights the hugely positive impact the Centre has had on not just supporting locals pursue their goals but supporting the development of the workforce in Far West NSW.

2025 was a year of significant achievement in the widening participation space for the Centre, with existing programs continuing to grow whilst new initiatives were established. We delivered our primary school program, Dream Thinkers Far West, to over 450 years 5 and 6 students across all four terms of the school year. In August, we collaborated with our university partners in Macquarie University and Charles Sturt University to adapt the program for online delivery with Broken Hill School of the Air, providing us with the chance to deliver the program to some of the most remote students in the state. The adaptation highlights the significant potential the RUSH Network has in delivering high quality and meaningful place-based widening participation initiatives that create real impact for their communities.

Throughout the year, the Centre has also broadened its partnerships with community industries, organisations and businesses. Over 20 local industries, organisations and businesses supported the delivery of the Centre's widening participation initiatives, we welcomed the Rotary Club of Broken Hill as a major sponsor of Celebration of Graduation and collaborated on the development of local student grants, plus we continued to work and partner with organisations such as Foundation Broken Hill, the Far West Local Health District and the Broken Hill University Department of Rural Health. We are grateful to have had such valuable support throughout the year and are proud to continue to play a significant role in empowering in our local community.



## 1000<sup>th</sup> Student Milestone

In March we reached the significant milestone of registering 1000 students since our inception in 2018! We are so proud to have been a part of so many individuals' learning journeys and look forward to being a part of many more.

## Celebration of Graduation

Celebration of Graduation celebrated the outstanding academic achievements of 17 local graduates representing a diverse range of degrees. Thank you again to our generous and valued major sponsors the Far West Local Health District, Foundation Broken Hill, the Rotary Club of Broken Hill and the Broken Hill Musician's Club.

## Dream Thinkers Far West

We delivered the Dream Thinkers Far West program to a remarkable total of over 450 students in 2025, highlighting the growth and future potential of the program. We are also thrilled to have developed an online version of the program, piloted with School of the Air this year!

## Social Events

Social events provide a chance for our students, as well as our staff, to unwind and enjoy some much needed downtime. Games nights, trivia and murder mysteries were highlights of the 2025 social calendar.



2025 Highlights

# 2025 SNAPSHOT



**55%**

are the first in  
their family  
to study



**12%**

of students  
identify as  
Indigenous

## 265 STUDENTS



**45+**

UNIVERSITIES  
& NUHEPS

**54%**  
study  
full  
time



**46%**  
study  
part  
time

## TOP AREAS OF STUDY

**35%**

Health

**18%**

Psychology,  
social work &  
Community  
Services

**15%**

Education

**20+**  
different  
areas of  
study

**1% non-binary**

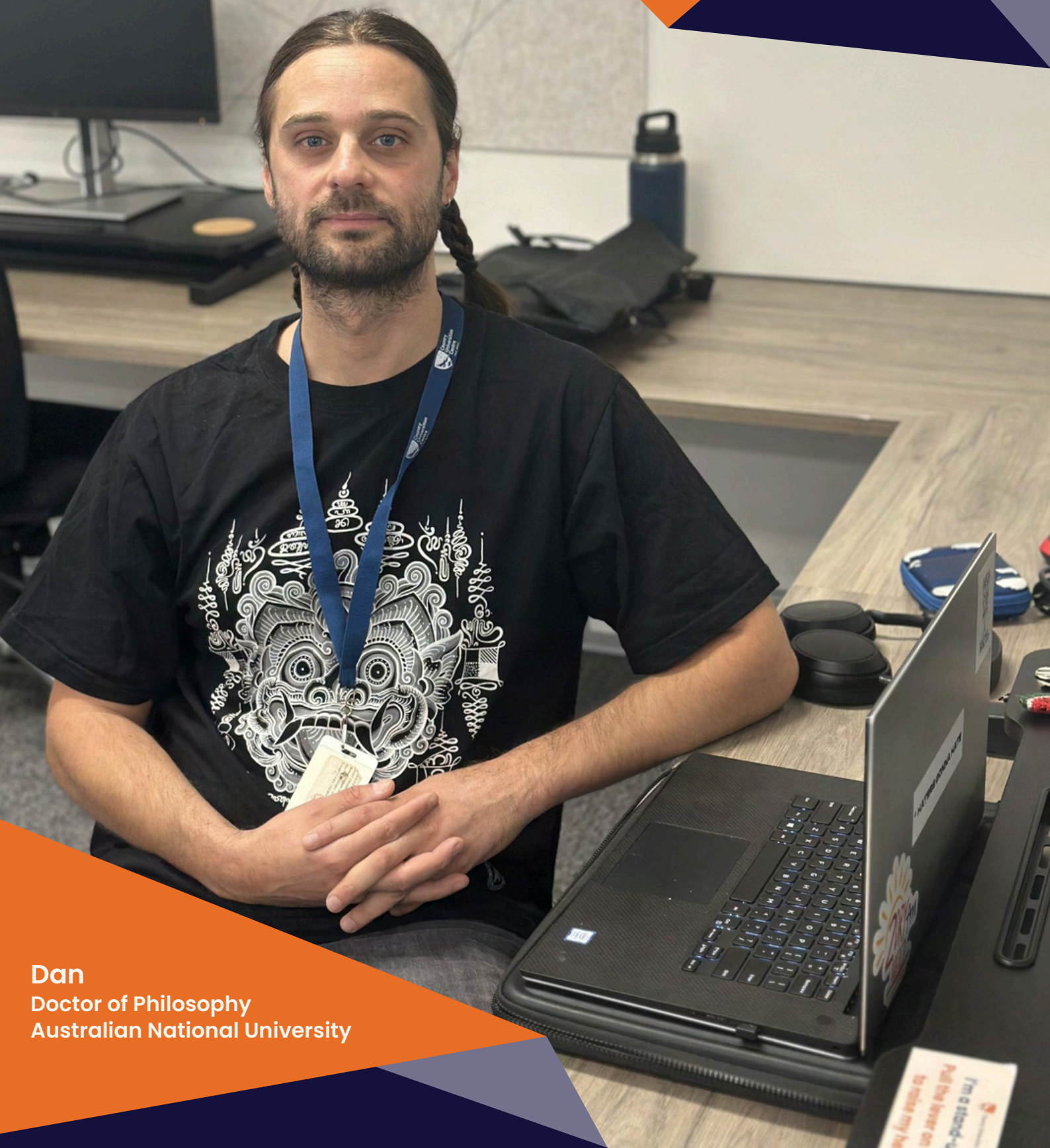
**80%**  
female



**19%**  
male



*"I couldn't have completed my degree to the standard I did without CUC. It's given me a safe, comfortable and supportive environment outside of the home, greatly improving my work-life balance, mental wellbeing and productivity."*



**Dan**  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Australian National University



# Celebrating Our Students

## 2025 Graduate Stories



**Ashli**

**Bachelor of Archaeology**  
*Macquarie University*

I chose to study a Bachelor of Archaeology as I enjoy the study of history and the more hands-on aspects of research. I like learning the different techniques archaeologists conduct in the field and having the freedom to research into my preferred area of history.

Having CUC in town has been a great help during the completion of my studies. I originally begun studying on campus, but made the call to move back home to Broken Hill and study online halfway through my degree. The centre gave me to have a quiet place to study and adjust to studying externally as I finished my degree. It also gave me a chance to be around other students, something that I missed from studying in person. A specific challenge for me while studying online as a regional student has been the lack of resources available, but CUC helped with this through their fantastic facilities and services they offer. I'm truly grateful for their support.

Over the past two and a half years, I have successfully completed a Master of Nurse Practitioner, specialising in Interpersonal Violence and Sexual Health. Balancing postgraduate study with full-time clinical work required dedication and structure, and the support of the Country Universities Centre (CUC) was invaluable in achieving this. The quiet and professional learning environment, combined with reliable technology, printing facilities, and extended opening hours, made the Centre extremely accessible and allowed me to stay focused and productive during demanding periods of study.

The CUC provided more than just a place to study. It created a sense of connection and motivation among local students pursuing tertiary education while living and working in the Far West. Its presence in Broken Hill ensures that higher education remains visible, accessible, and achievable for regional professionals, helping strengthen the local workforce and improve outcomes for our community.



**Regan**

**Master of Nurse Practitioner**  
*Flinders University*

# Angie

2025 Graduate

**Graduate Diploma in Legal Studies**

*University of Canberra*



I chose to study Law because I've always valued fairness, justice, and advocating for others. After years working in regional and community-focused roles, I wanted to take that commitment further; to understand how the law shapes lives and how I could use it to influence positive change. Completing my Graduate Diploma of Legal Studies was a milestone, and I'm now continuing toward my Juris Doctor to build on that foundation.

Having the CUC here in Broken Hill has been absolutely vital. Studying online in a remote area can feel isolating and overwhelming, but the CUC turned that around.

It gave me a professional study space, fast internet, and access to resources I simply couldn't get at home. But most importantly, it gave me connection. The staff and other students have created a space where encouragement and accountability go hand in hand.

The CUC has been my anchor, a place that kept me focused, supported, and reminded me that even in regional Australia, big goals are possible. My advice to anyone considering study would be to take the leap – and make the CUC your second home. It's the place where hard work meets encouragement, and where your dreams become your reality.





# 2025 ALUMNI

## CUC FAR WEST

**Kate Baldwin**

**Graduate Certificate in Nursing  
(Specialisation)**  
*University of Tasmania*

**Lucy Biddle**

**Master of Social Work**  
*Queensland University of Technology*

**Riley Bomford**

**Bachelor of Laws**  
*University of New England*

**Ruby Buchanan**

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

**Connor Burgin**

**Bachelor of Policing**  
*Charles Sturt University*

**Rebecca Burke**

**Graduate Certificate in Palliative Care**  
*Flinders University*

**Alex Callagher**

**Graduate Certificate in Critical Care  
Nursing**  
*Australian College of Nursing*

**Kieth Canela**

**Open Foundation**  
*University of Newcastle*

**Samantha Cecchin**

**Bachelor of Psychological  
Science/Bachelor of Criminology**  
*Deakin University*

**Regan Chesterfield**

**Master of Nurse Practitioner**  
*Flinders University*

**Rebecca Conti**

**Graduate Certificate in Nursing  
(Specialisation)**  
*University of Tasmania*

**Celeste Dally**

**Graduate Certificate in Nursing  
(Specialisation)**  
*University of Tasmania*

**Nadezda Dauge**

**Graduate Certificate in Nursing  
(Specialisation)**  
*University of Tasmania*

**Dannielle Davies**

**Bachelor of Nursing**  
*University of New England*

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**Kate Doyle**  
**Diploma of Early Childhood Education  
and Care**  
*TAFE NSW*

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**Leise Farquharson**  
**Bachelor of Education (Primary)**  
*Curtin University*

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**Jennifer French**  
**Graduate Diploma of Early Childhood  
Teaching**  
*Swinburne Online*

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**Lee Gardner**  
**Bachelor of Arts/Education**  
*Macquarie University*

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**Emily Hamilton**  
**Bachelor of GeoScience**  
*University of New England*

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**Kristy Hurley**  
**Graduate Diploma of Early Childhood  
Teaching**  
*Swinburne Online*

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**Andra Kloczko**  
**Graduate Diploma of Midwifery**  
*Charles Sturt University*

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**Angie Krause**  
**Graduate Diploma in Legal Studies**  
*University of Canberra*

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**Jade Lehmann**  
**Graduate Certificate in Nursing  
(Specialisation)**  
*University of Tasmania*

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**Melissa McInnes**  
**Master of Addictive Behaviours**  
*Monash University*

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**Haylee Drieman**  
**Bachelor of Education (Birth to 5 Years)**  
*Charles Sturt University*

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**Caryn Ferguson**  
**Certificate IV Training and Assessment**  
*Paramatta Community College*

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**Ashli Fryer**  
**Bachelor of Archaeology**  
*Macquarie University*

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**Elizabeth George**  
**Graduate Diploma of Nursing  
(Specialisation)**  
*University of Tasmania*

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**Olivia Harman**  
**Bachelor of Social Work**  
*Charles Sturt University*

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**Dalna Joseph**  
**Graduate Certificate in Nursing  
(Specialisation)**  
*University of Tasmania*

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**Delna Koraubara**  
**Bachelor of Nursing**  
*University of South Australia*

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**Christiarna Lee**  
**Diploma of Early Childhood Education  
and Care**  
*TAFE Digital NSW*

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**Cherry Luneza**  
**Graduate Certificate in Nursing  
(Specialisation)**  
*University of Tasmania*

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**Mikayla McRae**  
**Diploma of Business**  
*TAFE Digital NSW*

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**Jordan Medlin**  
**Diploma in Youth Work**  
*TAFE NSW*

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**Natalie Murray**  
**Graduate Certificate in Nursing  
(Specialisation)**  
*University of Tasmania*

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**Shakierra Murray**  
**Graduate Certificate in Nursing  
(Specialisation)**  
**University of Tasmania**

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**Caryn Muscat**  
**Bachelor of Education (Primary)**  
*CQ University*

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**Shae Nevill**  
**Certificate III and IV in Fitness**  
*Australian Training Company*

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**Geminique Pablo**  
**Bachelor of Psychological Science**  
*University of New England*

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**Lillie Paech**  
**Bachelor of Social Work**  
*Flinders University*

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**Elle Pearson**  
**Graduate Certificate in Applied  
Business**  
*Charles Sturt University*

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**Emma Perry**  
**Bachelor of Veterinary Technology**  
*Charles Sturt University*

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**Jorja Reed**  
**Tertiary Enabling Program**  
*Charles Darwin University*

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**Emma Reeves**  
**Master of Professional Psychology**  
*La Trobe University*

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**Christopher Richard**  
**Graduate Diploma of Legal Professional  
Practice**  
*University of New South Wales*

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**Di Ruela**  
**Mini MBA in Marketing**  
*Mark Ritson College*

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**Daniel Schulz**  
**Doctor of Philosophy**  
*Australian National University*

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**Jessica Taylor**  
**Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)**  
*University of Southern Queensland*

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**Tamara Thomas**  
**Bachelor of Nursing**  
*Deakin University*

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**Alex Thompson**  
**Bachelor of Applied Science**  
*Charles Sturt University*

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**Martin Thrift**  
**Master of Health Management**  
*University of New England*

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**Morgan Walsh**  
**Graduate Certificate in Nursing  
(Specialisation)**  
*University of Tasmania*

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**Christopher Webb**  
**Bachelor of Nursing**  
*University of South Australia*

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**Tyler West**  
**Certificate IV in Dental Assisting**  
*TAFE NSW*

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**Edie-Lee Wilkinson**  
**Graduate Certificate in Environmental  
Science**  
*University of New England*

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**Justin Wonson**  
**Bachelor of Nursing**  
*Charles Darwin University*

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**Cat Woodman**  
**Master of Social Work (Professional  
Qualifying)**  
*University of New England*





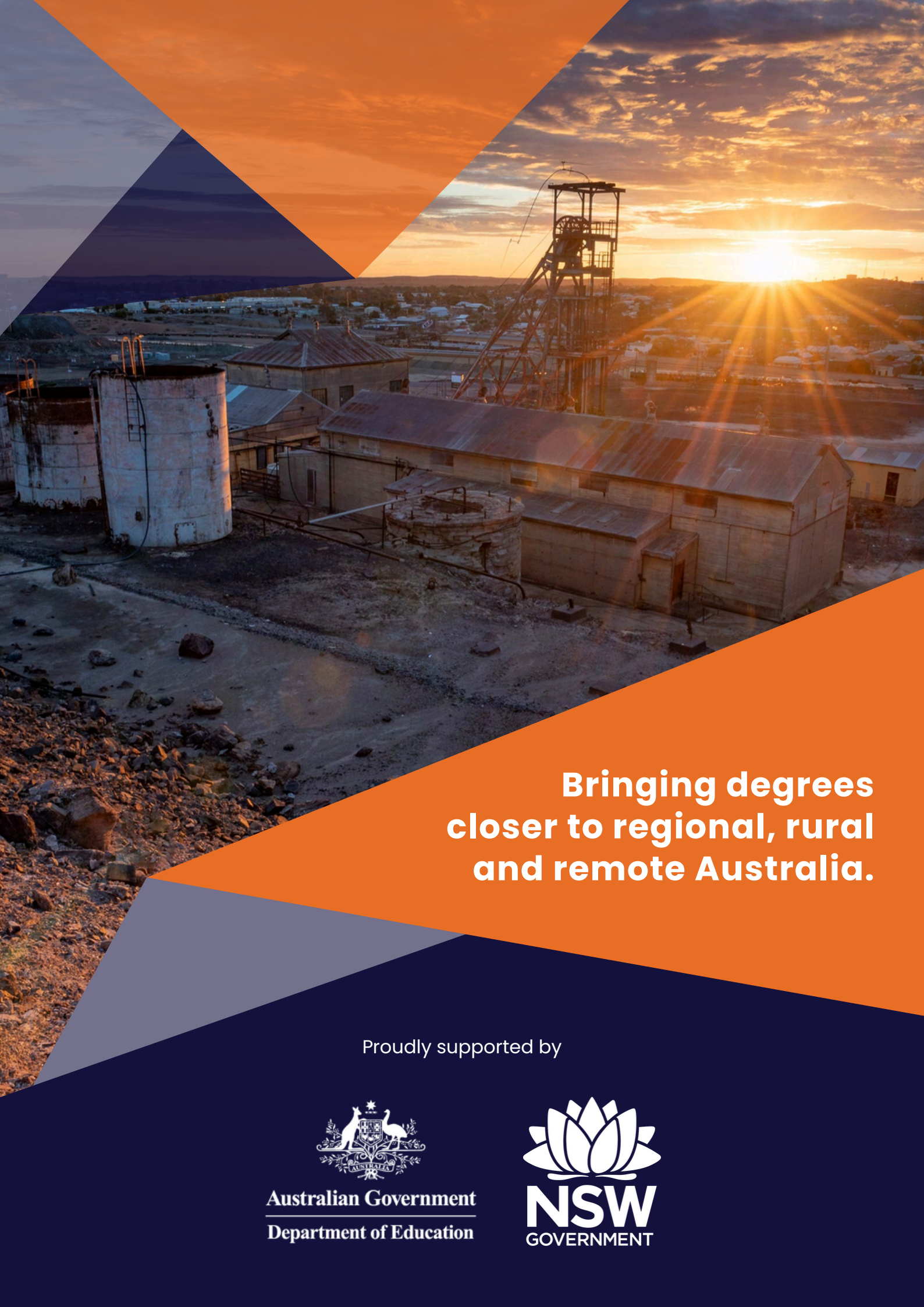
**Morgan**  
Bachelor of Nursing  
University of South  
Australia

*"I value studying at CUC Far West as the staff members are constantly checking up on me ensuring that I'm getting the best possible outcome for my learnings and ensuring that I am keeping on top of my work, it's the motivation that I need to keep pushing forwards."*









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

Proudly supported by



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

