

# Regional Universities Network: Engaging with regions, building a stronger nation

## *Volume 2 – Case Studies*

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**Inquiries:**

Executive Director  
Regional Universities Network  
Suite 508  
Level 5, Tower A, 7 London Circuit  
Canberra ACT 2601  
Ph: 02 6169 4090  
M: 0408 482 736  
[execdir@run.edu.au](mailto:execdir@run.edu.au)  
[www.run.edu.au](http://www.run.edu.au)

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# Introduction

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This document is Volume 2 of the Regional Universities Network (RUN) report *Regional Universities Network: Engaging with regions, building a stronger nation* and presents the 18 case studies documented as part of the RUN study on the social, cultural, environmental and economic contributions of its member universities to their regions and the nation.

The case studies were selected to provide a broad coverage of the Pascal framework<sup>1</sup> dimensions. The List of Case Studies on the next page maps each of the case studies to the first seven of the Pascal framework dimensions:

1. Enhancing regional infrastructure
2. Human capital development processes
3. Business development processes
4. Interactive learning and social capital development processes
5. Community development processes
6. Cultural development
7. Promoting sustainability.

The 8<sup>th</sup> framework dimension, 'Promoting engagement within the university', is not directly relevant to the case studies and is briefly discussed in section 10 of the main report (Volume 1).

The main report also makes reference to each case study in relevant sections. The List of Case Studies highlights that each case study addresses multiple dimensions of the Pascal framework.

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<sup>1</sup> Pascal International Observatory. (2009). *Benchmarking the regional contribution of universities*. Retrieved May 20, 2013, from Pascal International Observatory: <http://pascalobservatory.org/pascalnow/pascal-projects/benchmarking->

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# CASE STUDY 1: UB Horsham Campus

## *Partnering with a rural community to build human and social capital*

May 2013



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### 1. UNIVERSITY

University of Ballarat (UB)

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### 2. PARTNERS

Commonwealth, State and Local Government  
A diversity of regional agencies, groups and networks

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### 3. REGIONAL CONTEXT

The Wimmera Southern Mallee (WSM) region of Victoria is rich in unique natural assets and a productive wheat growing and sheep grazing agricultural region. It faces a number of challenges, including a relatively narrow economic base, high vulnerability to the negative impacts of climate change and a small, declining and ageing population.

Compared with the State average, young people in the Wimmera Southern Mallee (WSM) region of Victoria have significantly lower participation in post-secondary education and training and regional industries with growth potential are currently hampered by skill shortages. The WSM Regional Strategic Plan highlights that the region requires a regionally-specific approach to increasing skills and workforce participation.

Horsham is the largest city in the WSM region, with a population of approximately 20,000 people. It is located 190 kilometres north-west of Ballarat and 300 kilometres north-west of Melbourne.

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### 4. DESCRIPTION

UB's Horsham Campus is situated in the Baillie Street Education Precinct of Horsham and complements the University's other Western Victoria campuses at Ararat and Stawell. The Campus delivers a diversity of vocational education and training and higher education programs, including degree programs in business, education and health sciences. The Horsham Campus supplies the region with many of its tradespeople, para-professionals, nurses and teachers.

UB has recently reaffirmed its ongoing commitment to Horsham and the Wimmera region and has developed a managed growth strategy for revitalising the Campus. This recently included the opening of a new Wimmera Trade Training Centre, in partnership with Horsham College (a Senior College) and Longerenong College (a specialist agriculture training college). The University is also expanding

its higher education program offerings, with recent additions including the Bachelor of Applied Management Studies and Masters of Leadership programs.

The University's strategy is underpinned by a strong commitment to community and regional engagement. Senior UB staff from the Campus are Board members and active participants in a diversity of regional bodies and networks, including: Wimmera Development Association; Central Grampians & Wimmera Southern Mallee Local Learning and Employment Networks; Police and Community Consultative Group; Blue Ribbon Foundation; Horsham District Kindergarten Association; Horsham Campus Research Precinct Advisory Group; and, Wimmera Early Years Advisory Board.

The UB Head of Western Campuses has also recently played a key role in a groundbreaking initiative designed to deliver innovative and collaborative solutions for increasing post-secondary education participation, addressing skill shortages and ensuring alignment of knowledge and skills with the needs of growing industries. The WSM Workforce Group, established in October 2012, is a unique partnership between the University, Commonwealth, State and Local Government agencies, Regional Development Australia Grampians, Wimmera Development Association and various regional groups and networks and registered training organisations.

The Horsham Campus Research Precinct (HCRP), which grew out of the highly successful Water In Drylands Collaborative Research Program, also plays a key role in fostering the region's capacity to adapt to change, build resilience and achieve social, economic and environmental sustainability. UB staff and research students conduct research in close partnership with regional organisations such as Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water, DSPI Horsham, City and Shire Councils, Wimmera Development Association, Catchment Management Authorities and regional sustainability alliances.

Current and recent research includes: building the capacity of local government staff to be effective change agents for building resilient and sustainable communities; formal evaluation of the Wimmera Development Association's Regional Leadership Program; development of regional sustainability report cards; surveys of farmer attitudes, knowledge and behaviour towards climate change; sustainable water management in tourism; rural health policy and programs; 3D telemedicine; and, optimisation of water resources.

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## **5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE REGION**

The Horsham Campus is one of the city's major employers and also a key supplier of tertiary-educated tradespeople, para-professionals and professionals. The Campus makes a vitally important contribution to the region by enhancing regional infrastructure, building human and social capital, supporting community-based regeneration, and building capacity for managing the challenges of sustainability.

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## **6. NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES**

The WSM Workforce Group provides a nationally relevant exemplar model for Commonwealth, State and local collaboration in the development of regionally-specific workforce strategies. UB academic staff and researchers at the Horsham Campus regularly access their national and international knowledge and research networks to support regional capacity building and development.

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## **7. FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

The University is currently working with the WSM Workforce Group and others to investigate options for introducing an agriculture degree at the Horsham Campus.

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## **8. FURTHER INFORMATION**

Geoff Lord, Head – Western Campuses, UB, [head.westerncampus@ballarat.edu.au](mailto:head.westerncampus@ballarat.edu.au), 03 5362 2601

## CASE STUDY 2: SmartFarm

*Transforming farm productivity, sustainability and 'life on the land' through broadband-enabled technologies*

May 2013



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### 1. UNIVERSITY

University of New England (UNE) – Precision Agriculture Research Group

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### 2. PARTNERS

CSIRO – Digital Productivity and Services Flagship & Australian Centre for Broadband Innovation

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### 3. REGIONAL CONTEXT

The New England region of NSW has a strong agricultural industry, positioning it well to play an important role in national agriculture production as global demand grows, especially from Asia. To achieve its potential, the region's agriculture industry needs to be supported with a skills and knowledge base that drives innovation, improves productivity and ensures environmental sustainability.

Armidale was the first mainland site in Australia to launch the national broadband network. New broadband-enabled technologies are poised to play a transformative role in the agriculture and related sectors; however, evidence suggests that there is a significant gap between the technology becoming available and its take-up in practice by farmers. Demonstration sites tend to showcase individual technologies in isolation, rather than model the integrated use of a range of technologies.

While agriculture is a knowledge-intensive industry, with strong demand for skilled professionals, it has the lowest proportion of workers with post-secondary qualifications of all sectors of the economy and student demand for university agriculture courses continues to be weak nationally.

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### 4. DESCRIPTION

UNE is well progressed in transforming its 7,000 acre commercial farm ('Kirby Farm' located 10 km north east of the Armidale campus) into a SMART Farm (SMART = Sustainable, Manageable and Accessible Rural Technologies). The new SMART Farmhouse, linked via terrestrial wireless connection to the NBN, showcases the predominantly grazing SMART Farm and demonstrates the

latest on-site technologies aimed at improving productivity, environmental sustainability, safety, workflow and social/business support networks on Australian farms.

The Farm is deploying a range of technologies, including:

- Wireless sensors that monitor soil moisture, temperature and electrical conductivity, and air temperature every five minutes, creates a dynamic soil moisture soil map - providing vital information to farmers on where and when to plant crops, fertilise and move livestock.
- Wireless cattle tracking through ear tags and GPS collars - enabling farmers to keep a close watch on their livestock via their computer or mobile device no matter where they are, on or off their property.
- Satellite and handheld biomass sensing systems - providing near-real time estimates of pasture available to livestock.
- Walk-over-weigh and auto-drafting technologies providing producers with up to date production estimates for their livestock - significantly reducing labour requirements.
- SMART Farm Control Portal, bringing sensor data and information from around the farm together seamlessly in a user-friendly portal for easy access by the farmer.

Simple, functional technologies like miniature access cameras are being deployed to allow the farmer to trouble-shoot machinery problems, conduct rapid diagnoses of animal health problems, or identify troublesome weeds, by conducting a video-conference from the paddock or shed, directly with an expert located anywhere in Australia or the world. Cameras also enable remote observation of livestock at locations where they congregate to support animal management systems and increase productivity.

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## 5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE REGION

SMART Farm plays a critically important knowledge and technology transfer role of direct benefit to farmers in the New England region, and beyond. The ability to remotely monitor, evaluate and manage much of a farm's operations has the potential to provide enormous productivity gains. SMART Farming also offers the means to achieve improved environmental outcomes through highly efficient use of resources and reductions in the water and carbon footprint of farms.

UNE's working model of the 'farm of the future' assists young people in the region to better understand the diversity of agricultural career opportunities available to them, the knowledge- and technology-intensive nature of farming, and the changing nature of the farming lifestyle.

SMART Farming has the potential to create new, regional market opportunities around data management, remote servicing, technology development, occupational safety, agronomy and professional development.

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## 6. NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES

The SMART Farm represents a demonstration site of national and international significance.

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## 7. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The SMART Farm will be used as a connected classroom, where community and students can access the latest data streaming in from a range of field, animal and machinery sensors. Building on UNE's international leadership in Precision Agriculture, Education, Rural Health, and Environmental and Rural Science, the Farm will also serve as an instrumented research laboratory, a diagnostic landscape unmatched anywhere else in the world.

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## 8. FURTHER INFORMATION

Professor David Lamb, Precision Agriculture Research Group, [dlamb@une.edu.au](mailto:dlamb@une.edu.au), 02 67733565

## CASE STUDY 3: QuickSmart

### *Building literacy and numeracy skills to bridge the achievement gap*

May 2013



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#### 1. UNIVERSITY

University of New England (UNE)

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#### 2. PARTNERS

- Federal Government
- Government, Catholic and Independent Education Authorities in all Australian States and Territories
- Department of Correctional Services in the Northern Territory
- Minerals Council of Australia
- GEMCO (BHP Billiton) on Groote Eylandt
- Western Cape Regional Partnership (including Rio Tinto)
- Edmund Rice Education Australia
- Ballarat Community Educational Alliance
- Yugalbar Philanthropic Foundation

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#### 3. REGIONAL CONTEXT

The academic achievement of Australian students from regional and rural areas lags behind that of their urban peers. This pattern remains the case whether performance is measured by international tests of mathematics, science and literacy (e.g. PISA and TIMSS) or national tests of numeracy and literacy (i.e. NAPLAN).

In 2001, researchers in UNE's National Centre of Science, ICT, and Mathematics Education for Regional and Rural Australia (SiMERR) started working with two Armidale schools to develop, trial and implement research-based, small-group instructional strategies to develop the literacy and numeracy skills of persistently underachieving middle school students. The resulting program, QuickSmart, has since evolved to become one of Australia's most widely adopted literacy and numeracy programs, underpinned by extensive evaluation data demonstrating the program's positive results and enduring effectiveness for years following its completion.

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#### 4. DESCRIPTION

QuickSmart is a basic academic skills program for students from 10-to-15 years of age, and adults from a variety of employment, pre-employment, industry and correctional centre settings. It is based on educational information processing and neuro-scientific research and principles.

In 2013, the program is offered across Australia in over 900 government, Catholic and independent schools and to more than 12,000 students. The program network includes approximately 5,000 instructors, co-ordinators and administrative leaders.

QuickSmart programs require pairs of students to work with an informed adult instructor for three 30-minute lessons each week for 30 weeks. An important underlying goal of each lesson is to 'structure for success' by providing participants with regular and predictable learning sequences. Instructional time is made available for students to practice and improve on what they already know, and to learn and practice new knowledge. Participants learn to develop effective strategies and participate in targeted practice activities that meet student's learning needs, raise expectations of student performance, and also provide students with opportunities to self-monitor and to receive immediate feedback.

The QuickSmart team has produced an extensive website which describes the program in detail, makes available independent research evidence, and provides a 'private area' for both the literacy and numeracy programs where practitioners share resources and enter research data.

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## **5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE REGION**

QuickSmart research started in New England schools and the program continues to be strong, successful and well supported in the region.

The QuickSmart program has demonstrated that it effectively addresses one of the most pressing issues in education, particularly in rural and regional settings: how to close the gap between low-achieving and average-achieving students in the areas of numeracy and literacy. Schools located in regional, rural, remote, very remote and metropolitan locations have recorded student cognitive growth of up to three years in the 30-week program based on effect-size statistics. Many schools, particularly in the Northern Territory, New England and Western Sydney, have successfully implemented QuickSmart programs over a number of consecutive years, with diverse student populations, including substantial numbers of Indigenous students.

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## **6. NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES**

In recognition of its national, state and regional contributions, QuickSmart has been supported by a large number of federal and state/territory research grants totally more than \$7 million. The program's reach, applicability and contributions have extended well beyond school settings to also deliver adult learning opportunities in correctional centres, pre-employment programs and Indigenous communities, and on mining sites.

Educational authorities around the world are challenged by difficulties with basic academic skills and there has been considerable international interest in QuickSmart programs, including from researchers in the United States, South Korea and Argentina.

To disseminate their findings nationally and internationally, the QuickSmart team has produced significant scholarly output in the form of journal articles, book chapters and conference presentations and papers.

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## **7. FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

Qualitative and quantitative research evidence continues to drive innovation in the QuickSmart programs. Most recently, QuickSmart has received a federal grant to support the online delivery of numeracy and literacy programs.

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## **8. FURTHER INFORMATION**

QuickSmart website: <http://www.une.edu.au/simerr/quicksmart>  
Professor John Pegg, [jpegg@une.edu.au](mailto:jpegg@une.edu.au), 02 6773 5070  
Associate Professor Lorraine Graham, [lgraham@une.edu.au](mailto:lgraham@une.edu.au), 02 6773 3821

# CASE STUDY 4: Choices Applied Theatre Project

## Minimising youth risk taking behaviour at 'Schoolies'

May 2013



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### 1. UNIVERSITY

CQUniversity Australia

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### 2. PARTNERS

Queensland State Government agencies of Health (Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drugs Service; Sexual Health), Police, Transport, and Communities

Whitsunday Regional Council  
Reg Frogs Australia (from 2013)  
Friends of the Conservatorium Inc

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### 3. REGIONAL CONTEXT

Celebrating Schoolies is a major social phenomenon in Australia, where thousands of young people converge on beachside holiday destinations to celebrate the end of their formal schooling years and the transition to young adulthood. Every year, Schoolies continues to attract significant media attention and public concern over its impact on both the young people involved and the communities near Schoolies venues. Thousands of school leavers from Central and North Queensland attend the Whitsunday Schoolies event, based at Airlie Beach (close to CQUniversity's Mackay campus), while others flock to destinations such as the Gold Coast.

In 1998, it was recognised that the conventional approach to delivering health, safety and legal messages to students via formal presentations from teachers, police officers, health workers, etc was failing to effectively engage students. CQUniversity was subsequently approached by regional agencies to collaborate on an applied theatre project to capture the harm minimisation messages for safe partying in a format that would actively engage young people in Year 12.

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### 4. DESCRIPTION

Choices is run by CQUniversity Bachelor of Theatre students who write, direct, choreograph and perform the 45-minute music and drama presentation (using comic skits, songs and dances) based on well-known movie and TV themes, weaved around 30+ key health, safety and legal messages relevant to Year 12 students. The University and its students work closely with the program's partners to ensure that the key messages are reviewed/updated each year to reflect

the changing environment and associated risks. The students performing are close in age to the audience, therefore peer learning becomes an important factor in engaging this target group.

The production is 'on the road' for two weeks each year just prior to Schoolies and delivered at participating high schools within the Mackay and Townsville Health Service Districts, and for the first time in 2012, in Bundaberg. In 2012 over 4,000 Year 12 students attended Choices across 38 North and Central Queensland secondary schools. Since inception in 1999 Choices has been performed for 14 consecutive years to over 230 secondary schools and 26,000 students.

The Queensland Police Service provides uniformed police officers for the entire length of the tours to all the schools. The officers take part in the actual performances and also join the panel discussion at the end of each show adding vital credibility to the messages being presented and helping to build positive bridges between the school leavers and the police – an important aspect of crime prevention.

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## 5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE REGION

In 2011, independent research into the impact of the Choices program in reducing drinking and other risk behaviours during Schoolies celebrations found that "the Choices prevention program reduced the incidence of engaging in risky behaviour by 59%...". The research made it clear that students who had watched the Choices presentation were able to "translate knowledge acquired during the presentation into behaviours resulting in safer celebration".<sup>2</sup>

Statistics from the Whitsunday Police District indicates that 'Choices' has a significant effect on reducing the number of infringements by Schoolies participants and reports of crime during Schoolies' weeks. Choices has consequently been identified as one of the Mackay Police Service's key crime prevention initiatives.

CQUniversity Theatre students gain valuable learning experiences as creative practitioners and also have the opportunity to work side-by-side with health professionals, law-enforcement officers and community agencies, putting into practice the graduate attributes of teamwork, critical thinking, problem-solving, ethical practice and communication.

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## 6. NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES

The Choices program has been presented at Conferences throughout Australia, with one of the most frequently asked questions "how can this program be replicated in other parts of Australia?". Choices team members continue to work with other regions to help find solutions to providing appropriate safety responses for their Year 12 students embarking on 'Schoolies' celebrations. The program is also a finalist in the 2013 MacJannet prize, a Talloires Network international award recognising exceptional student community engagement and community service.

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## 7. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In 2013, CQUniversity is responding to increasing demand from schools and community agencies for the delivery of Choices by adding a third university student team to the program, taking the total number of students involved each year to 33. Motivated by the success and impact of the Choices program, the Mackay Police Service and other regional agencies are now working with CQUniversity to design and deliver an applied theatre project for Year 3 and younger school students to deliver important messages about protective behaviours, injury prevention and effective responses to bullying.

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## 8. FURTHER INFORMATION

<https://my.cqu.edu.au/web/engagement-channel/choices-applied-theatre-project>

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<sup>2</sup> Quek, L.H., White, A., Low, C., Brown, J. E., Dalton, N., Dow, D., et al. (2012). Good choices, great future: An applied theatre prevention program to reduce alcohol-related risky behaviours during Schoolies. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 1 - 6.

# CASE STUDY 5: Community for Community (C4C)

## *Building community networks and capacity to address regional social challenges*

May 2013



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### 1. UNIVERSITY

University of Southern Queensland (USQ)

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### 2. PARTNERS

- Toowoomba Flexi School, Centenary Heights State High School
- The Older Men's Network Inc
- Lifeline Darling Downs and Southwest Qld Ltd
- Toowoomba Regional Council
- Toowoomba East Rotary
- East Creek Community Centre
- Regional network of community organisations, businesses and professionals

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### 3. REGIONAL CONTEXT

Compared with the Australian average, young people in rural and regional Australia are less likely to complete secondary school or participate in tertiary education. For some youth, this can mark the beginning of a negative cycle leading to unemployment, poverty, social exclusion and mental health problems.

Almost 30 per cent of older people are chronically lonely, with men experiencing more extreme effects. Suicide rates for older men increase steadily from the age of 65 onwards and suicide rates in rural and regional Australia are significantly higher than the national average.

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### 4. DESCRIPTION

USQ's C4C multidisciplinary team fosters the development of multifaceted community networks and undertakes community-based research and knowledge sharing initiatives aimed at building regional capacity for addressing a range of social problems such as social dislocation, youth suicide and domestic violence. It undertakes research into how and why successful community capacity building initiatives work and shares the resulting knowledge with a view to applying these 'success factors' to community initiatives in other contexts.

The C4C social research model grew out of the University's close involvement with the initiation, early development and evolution of the Toowoomba Flexi School, a community initiative that is changing

lives by breaking the cycle of educationally 'at risk' students through improving school attainment and transitions to tertiary education and employment.

The School offers an alternative education model for disenfranchised and disadvantaged 15-17 year old young people in the Senior Phase of Learning: the majority have no clear transition to a desirable educational or work outcome; over one third identify as Indigenous or Torres Strait Islanders; about one quarter have been homeless in the prior year; and, one in ten are single mothers.

The Flexi School functions as an annexe of the Centenary Heights State High School and provides 70 student places, with demand currently exceeding capacity. It provides a highly flexible student-centred approach, enriched by a strong community commitment to the re-engagement of the students. Through the support of local businesses, for example, almost all students participate in work experience and the achievements of Flexi School students are publicly acknowledged and celebrated by the City's Mayor and others.

The Older Men's Network (TOMNET), established on the Darling Downs to enhance social networks for older men and address risk factors for suicide, also partners with the Flexi School to provide an impactful win-win intergenerational mentoring program. The program provides leadership to students through teaching specific life skills, giving guidance and support, and helping the young people to recognise their strengths. It also empowers TOMNET mentors to make active educational and social contributions to their local community.

About 25% of Year 12 Flexi students participate in USQ's Tertiary Preparation Program and the University works closely with the School to provide students with access to higher education.

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## 5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE REGION

Flexi School enables disenfranchised young people in Toowoomba to feel valued and re-connect with their community, thus breaking the cycle of failure and unemployment and empowering them to be productive citizens. The intergenerational mentoring program helps to bridge the generation gap, improve the welfare of older men, and promote social harmony in the region.

USQ's C4C team makes a key contribution to the Flexi School and its outcomes by playing a lead role in facilitating supportive community networks and undertaking research that identifies success factors, underpins evidence-based practice and assesses outcomes. C4C also builds social capital and facilitates the transfer and adaptation of knowledge to address social challenges in other contexts within the region.

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## 6. NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES

The Flexi-TOMNET partnership won the National Australia Bank's Schools First National Impact Award in 2010. The USQ C4C team members disseminate their research findings through international and national conferences and also have a co-edited book in production exploring regional perspectives of community capacity building and mutual obligation, with a chapter dedicated to the Flexi School.

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## 7. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

USQ's C4C team, the Flexi School, TOMNET, Lifeline and a number of other regional bodies have partnered to submit an application for Regional Development Australia funding, under the auspices of Lifeline, to build a mentoring hub adjacent to the Flexi School. The hub would be used by the school and would also be a regional hub for research, training and dissemination of the intergenerational mentoring model into the region, and in time, nationally.

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## 8. FURTHER INFORMATION

Professor Lorelle Burton, C4C Project Leader, [lorelle.burton@usq.edu.au](mailto:lorelle.burton@usq.edu.au), 07 4631 2853

# CASE STUDY 6: Northern United Football Team Wellness Program

*An innovative approach to meeting the health needs of Indigenous communities*

May 2013



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## 1. UNIVERSITY

Southern Cross University (SCU) – School of Health and Human Sciences

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## 2. PARTNERS

Northern United Rugby League Football Club  
Meridian Health

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## 3. REGIONAL CONTEXT

Aboriginal people are the traditional custodians of the NSW Northern Rivers region and the region has a significantly higher proportion of Aboriginal residents than the State average. The Lismore-based Northern United Rugby League Football Club has three teams, comprising mostly Aboriginal men, with ages ranging from 17 to 35 years. The Club plays in mainstream competition and is a source of great pride to the Northern Rivers Aboriginal community.

Northern United has a strong focus on the health and wellbeing of the players on and off the field, and believes that sport is an effective vehicle for engaging Aboriginal men and their families in a broader conversation about health and wellbeing. Due to a range of economic and social factors, Indigenous Australians continue to suffer a greater burden of ill health than the rest of the population and are often reluctant to seek help through mainstream health services.

Northern United and Meridian Health, which operates a health clinic in Lismore, have been working together for three years to improve Indigenous health in the region.

SCU has recently opened a Health Clinic on its Lismore campus, a purpose-built health and teaching facility providing free consultations to the public in a range of allied health areas, including osteopathy, exercise physiology, naturopathy and nursing. Senior and postgraduate students undertake consultations under the supervision of fully qualified and accredited practitioners. This year, a state-of-the-art Health Clinic was also opened on the University's Gold Coast campus.

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#### 4. DESCRIPTION

Northern United, Meridian Health and SCU Health Clinic recently collaborated to design and deliver an early intervention and preventive health initiative, with a focus on pre-season health check-ups for both senior and junior players. The three-way partnership is built on a shared commitment to Indigenous self-determination and collaboration with the Indigenous community.

Exercise physiology students tested the players' physical fitness, strength, and breath and lung capacity; osteopathy students provided full muscular-skeletal assessments; and, nursing students reviewed the players' medical histories and organised blood samples for testing. The final step of the check-up was an appointment with a registered nurse and doctor from Meridian Health. A specific health and exercise program was developed for each player, including education on health and nutrition, with follow-ups provided at six weeks and 12 weeks.

To minimise barriers to participation for players, the health assessments were conducted on campus in a relaxed format over one afternoon, followed by a barbeque. This approach had the added benefit of encouraging players' extended families, including babies and elders, to also participate, resulting in many additional members of the Aboriginal community accessing full health assessments and becoming familiar with the SCU Health Clinic and campus.

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#### 5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE REGION

The Northern United players are directly benefiting from the program in terms of their physical fitness, overall health, nutrition knowledge, and increased familiarity with mainstream health services. In some cases, life-threatening health conditions have been identified and treated.

With the players being key role models in their communities, the collaborative partnership is also having positive flow on effects to the broader Indigenous community. Approximately 25 per cent of Meridian Health's patients are now Indigenous, a remarkable achievement given that less than four per cent of the region's population identifies as Indigenous. Meridian has the highest percentage of aboriginal patients outside the designated "Aboriginal Medical Services" known as AMS. There is one based in Lismore, Ballina and Casino. Increasing numbers of Indigenous people are also seeking health services through the SCU Health Clinic, so much so that the Centre is now designing its clinic timetable to specifically accommodate their needs.

SCU's allied health students have the valuable opportunity to build Indigenous cultural competency, equipping them on graduation to better address the needs of Aboriginal communities both within the region and beyond. The collaborative program is also creating opportunities for the University to make its campus more accessible to the Aboriginal community, thus potentially breaking down barriers to participation in higher education.

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#### 6. NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES

The Wellbeing Program offers a model with great potential for successful application or adaptation in many other regions of Australia.

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#### 7. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The regional Aboriginal community has approached the SCU Health Clinic about establishing a program for women elders, and this is currently being explored.

The Lismore GP Super Clinic, established and operated by Meridian Health, will open in the near future. The Clinic's allied health professionals will be based at the SCU Health Clinic, creating additional opportunities for partnering with the Indigenous community to enhance health outcomes and prepare SCU students for culturally competent professional practice.

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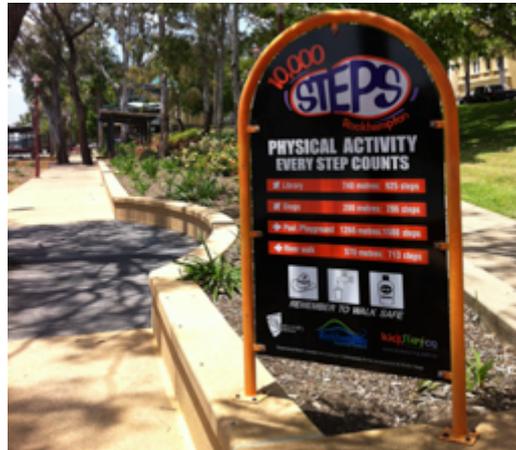
#### 8. FURTHER INFORMATION

Ben Roche, Head of Sustainability, Partnerships and Community Engagement, SCU, 02 6620 3150

# CASE STUDY 7: 10,000 Steps

## *Promoting health-related physical activity in Australian adults*

May 2013



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### 1. UNIVERSITY

CQUniversity Australia

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### 2. PARTNERS

Queensland Health  
Range of government health agencies, NGO's, Indigenous and community groups, employers

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### 3. REGIONAL CONTEXT

Physical inactivity is one of the leading modifiable causes of morbidity and mortality in Australia. There is a need to develop and evaluate innovative physical activity interventions, which can be made available to large numbers of adults at low cost.

10,000 Steps, funded by Queensland Health, was Australia's first 'whole of community' health promotion physical activity project. In 2001, the Rockhampton region was chosen for a two-year trial of the project as the residents showed 'typical' levels of inactivity and the regional setting was judged to be conducive to effecting community change through a regional collaborative approach. During these two years, researchers from CQUniversity, in collaboration with partner universities, the Rockhampton community and a range of regional, state and national agencies, researched, designed and guided the implementation of a trial project.

The initial 10,000 Steps Rockhampton Project was evaluated to be an exemplary model of an effective multi-strategy, multi-sector physical activity project, and Queensland Health has since provided ongoing funding to CQUniversity to expand the program's reach at a state and national level, primarily through a web-based approach.

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### 4. DESCRIPTION

10,000 Steps is a health promotion project, with the specific goal of increasing health-related physical activity in the Australian adult population. It is freely accessible and aims to increase the day-to-day physical activity levels of individuals by encouraging the use of a step-counting pedometer to accumulate "incidental" physical activity on a daily basis. The project is designed to engage with individuals, workplaces and communities. As at April 2013, the project had over 228,000 individual

members and over 8,000 workplaces registered with an average of 3,600 new individual members every month. Individual members are from all Australian States and Territories and also overseas.

A social media strategy was initiated in 2011 to increase the reach of the project, particularly in population groups not typically associated with 10,000 Steps. As a result, a dynamic Facebook page was created to reach a more diverse population group; this has resulted in over 47,000 individuals being exposed to physical activity promotion messages through this communication channel. A mobile phone app, *iStepLog*, which has also been made freely available to enable members to record their daily physical activity, has now been downloaded 33,000 times.

The University's Centre for Physical Activity Studies, which aims to advance the science of physical activity research, coordinates the ongoing research, development and dissemination of 10,000 Steps, assisting individuals and health professionals around Australia and the world. By establishing collaborative interactions with research partners, government health agencies, NGO's, local councils, workplaces, and community and Indigenous groups, mutually beneficial knowledge drives the further development of 10,000 Steps, whereby research activities go hand in hand with a service to community health.

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## 5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE REGION

The project has been successful in motivating regional communities, workplaces and individuals to increase their physical activity levels. Following on from the success of the initial trial project in Rockhampton, early adopters of 10,000 Steps included the Bowen and Burdekin Shires, Mackay City Council and Townsville City Council. Regional councils, organisations, trade unions and businesses from multiple sectors continue to support and promote 10,000 Steps as an important element of their health promotion and recreation strategies.

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## 6. NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES

The 10,000 Steps project has led to many peer-reviewed academic publications, facilitating the dissemination of knowledge both nationally and internationally. Similar projects now operate in other parts of the world including "10,000 Steps Ghent, Belgium" and the "Official 10,000 Steps Program New Zealand".

10,000 Steps is now the key physical activity promotion tool for the Queensland Government's Healthy Worker initiative, which is federally funded under the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health. At a national level, over 8,000 organisations, 10,000 teams and 52,000 members have participated in Workplace Challenges.

The project is currently working with the Queensland transport industry to encourage transport workers to improve their health by increasing their levels of physical activity and to enable workplaces to experience the safety, financial and cultural benefits of a healthier workforce.

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## 7. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The success of the 10,000 Steps project has led to a new 4 year National Health and Medical Research Council funded research project, in collaboration with the University of Western Sydney, whereby the effectiveness of the conventional 10,000 Steps website will be compared with an innovative website based on social networking (the Walk 2.0 website).

10,000 Steps is also working in partnership with the Woorabinda Aboriginal Community in Central Queensland to develop and trial an initiative aimed at enhancing health outcomes for Aboriginal communities

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## 8. FURTHER INFORMATION

<http://www.10000steps.org.au/>

## CASE STUDY 8: Smarter, Safer Homes

*Enhancing quality of life for older people and their families*

May 2013



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### 1. UNIVERSITY

University of New England (UNE)

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### 2. PARTNERS

CSIRO  
Autumn Lodge, Aged Care Facility  
Armidale General Practitioners

RDA – Northern Inland NSW  
Industry partners

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### 3. REGIONAL CONTEXT

Australia's ageing population is placing increasing upward pressure on government health and aged care expenditure. There is a critical need to find innovative cost-effective models for supporting older people to live independently and stay in their homes longer. New communications technologies have the potential to provide ground-breaking solutions, particularly for regional and rural communities.

The regional city of Armidale, located in the Northern Inland region of NSW, represents an ideal test site for harnessing the potential of technology to support elderly people and their families:

- Armidale was the first mainland site for the launch of the National Broadband Network.
- For every 100 people of working age (15-64 years old) in the Northern Inland region, there are 27 people aged over 65 years. The comparable national figure is 20.<sup>3</sup>
- The region's strategic plan identifies the lack of access to regular and basic health and community services as one of the region's most significant issues.

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### 4. DESCRIPTION

The multidisciplinary Smarter, Safer Homes pilot project aims to demonstrate the effectiveness of broadband-enabled technology in: enhancing quality of life for elderly people living independently; monitoring their health and wellbeing; and, keeping them in touch with their families. Residents of up to 20 broadband-connected independent living units at Autumn Lodge, an aged care facility in Armidale, are taking part in the trial project and helping with the design of services being developed. The project has two major elements. The first element is focused on the use of in-home sensors to monitor the physical health and wellbeing of residents.

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<sup>3</sup> Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport. (n.d.). *myregion. Northern Inland*. Retrieved April 16, 2013, from <http://myregion.gov.au/profile/northern-inland/data/population/age>.

The sensors being trialled:

- sense the physical environment, such as heat in the kitchen and bathroom that could cause burns or scalds
- sense movement inside and outside the house, enabling any decline in movement patterns to be recognised and so help identify slips and falls
- collect individually tailored disease-specific health information using biomedical devices that transmit data for remote access and follow-up by health practitioners.

Through remote monitoring, older people can be alerted by a message to their own personal device, and there is the capability of the elderly individual's children, friends and medical support practitioners being alerted to sensors being activated.

The second element is focused on social inclusion and psychological wellbeing by enabling older people to talk with family and friends via video-conferencing technology. This technology also enables residents to remotely consult doctors, allied health professionals and pharmacists.

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## 5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE REGION

The Smarter, Safer Homes Project enhances the health outcomes and quality of life of older people together with providing information to support persons including adult children and significant others. The project is piloting a cost-effective model for monitoring the physical health and wellbeing of elderly people living independently. The potential significantly ameliorates the impacts of shortages, in rural and regional Australia, of health and aged care professionals and services. It opens up new possibilities for the virtual delivery of some specialist health services that would otherwise be largely inaccessible to older people in the Northern Inland region.

The pilot project has facilitated curriculum renewal in the University's medical and allied health programs with the development of new units of study in telehealth and telemedicine. This will enable the supply of health professionals with the knowledge and competencies to deliver innovative services that meet the needs of the regional community.

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## 6. NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES

The Smarter, Safer Homes pilot project has been recognised as a key initiative within CSIRO's 'Digital Productivity and Services' National Research Flagship. The project has been attracting interest nationally from health and community service providers.

With many countries around the world facing similar issues to Australia, with ageing populations and escalating healthcare costs, the project also has global relevance. To date, the project research team has been invited to present their findings to the Argentinian government and to speak at European conferences.

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## 7. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The pilot project is: evaluating the resilience of older people and their families in utilising IT infrastructure and communications technology; the cost sustainability of the model; and, its scalability. The research findings will provide important guidance to the future development of national, state and regional health and aged care policy and service delivery models.

The project is also developing the open and interoperable standards-based Smarts Assisted Independent Living (SAIL) platform that will enable the future replication and roll-out of the pilot model across multiple locations and types of broadband-enabled devices.

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## 8. FURTHER INFORMATION

<http://www.une.edu.au/faculties/professions/fibre-enabled/s-s-homes.php>

## CASE STUDY 9: USQ Artsworx

### *Delivering accessible arts and cultural experiences in regional Queensland*

May 2013



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#### 1. *UNIVERSITY*

University of Southern Queensland (USQ)

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#### 2. *PARTNERS*

WIN Television  
The Chronicle

River 94.9FM  
Heritage Bank

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#### 3. *REGIONAL CONTEXT*

In 1911, Toowoomba had a vibrant arts scene and opened Australia's largest regional performing arts centre and cinema, the Empire Theatre. While it was the cultural hub of the region for many years, the Theatre closed in 1971, unable to compete with other forms of entertainment including television. It lay dormant and decaying for over 25 years until its restoration and re-opening in 1997.

In those intervening years and subsequently, USQ and its predecessor institutions played a critical role in sustaining and developing a vibrant arts and cultural scene in the region by: creating and producing community arts experiences; delivering higher education programs in music, theatre, visual arts, creative media, applied media and graphic design; and, producing new works and creative outputs.

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#### 4. *DESCRIPTION*

USQ's Artsworx produce an annual season of high quality, innovative, artistic and cultural experiences which showcase emerging artists from the University's Faculty of Arts student cohort as well as professional guest artists, in collaboration with a range of community and corporate stakeholders, including the Empire Theatre.

Two-thirds of Artsworx activities directly involve Bachelor of Creative Arts students, who are typically involved in the entire production or exhibition process, providing them with invaluable practical experience with real public outcomes. They are assessed on their participation by USQ academic staff, and often work with guest directors and artists, giving them an opportunity to learn from acclaimed professionals working nationally and internationally.

The other third of the Artsworx product focuses upon creativity, cultural engagement and life-long learning via its McGregor Schools programs and other events. USQ students are able to participate in the Schools and receive credit toward an elective course in their degree.

In summary, Artsworx attracts around 25,000 people to USQ each year through its various programs:

- *McGregor Schools* - Over the past four decades, the McGregor Schools program has established itself as one of the premier residential, performing, visual and creative arts learning experiences in Australia. Each January (Summer School) and July (Winter School) over 700 arts enthusiasts (from absolute beginners to professionals) from around the nation, particularly regional and rural areas, converge on the Toowoomba campus to take part in the popular 10-day and five-day residential arts retreats. The Schools culminate in popular public musical performances and exhibitions.
- *Shakespeare in the Park Festival* - Celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2013, the large Festival incorporates theatre, music, dance, film, exhibitions, symposia and workshops. Artsworx has secured the Australia and New Zealand Shakespeare Association's Biennial International Conference for October 2014, a first for an Australian regional university.
- *Children's Theatre Week* - Running since the late 1970s, this event for children aged 4-12 years is created and delivered by USQ Creative Arts students.
- *Twilight Series* - A diverse program of six music recitals and two engaging talks held across the year, featuring notable guest performers and speakers from around the country.
- *Exhibition Series* – An annual exhibition series showcasing a diverse selection of works by USQ Visual Arts students (including postgraduates) and staff and visiting artists.

In addition, Artsworx undertakes community engaged projects. Working with Aboriginal custodians at Gummingurru, for example, Artsworx created and produced a new play based on local history and a very significant Aboriginal cultural heritage site. It also provides resources for primary and secondary teachers, aligned with its annual program, to support the educational experience of participating school students.

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## 5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE REGION

Through its cultural, recreational and educational activities, Artsworx enhances the region's liveability and attractiveness as a place to live and work. It also contributes strongly to regional tourism and fosters the development of regional creative industries. The Artsworx program breaks down barriers to higher education by inviting the community to come onto the University campus and experience first hand what USQ has to offer.

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## 6. NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES

Artsworx is a unique entity within the Australian higher education sector and a successful model for University community engagement. Artsworx academic staff members publish nationally and internationally in fields such as regional arts, audience reception and development and community engagement.

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## 7. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

With the Toowoomba region undergoing significant industry, demographic, social and environmental change, Artsworx is committed to expanding its community networks and building regional arts and cultural capacity to impact on positive social change and build social cohesion. It also plans to expand its geographic footprint to play a greater role in the communities surrounding the University's Springfield and Fraser Coast campuses.

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## 8. FURTHER INFORMATION

Artsworx website: <http://www.usq.edu.au/artsworx>

Dr Rebecca Scollen, Manager Artsworx, [rebecca.scollen@usq.edu.au](mailto:rebecca.scollen@usq.edu.au), 07 4631 2774

# CASE STUDY 10: Bundjalung Cultural Mapping Project

## *Empowering an Indigenous community to preserve its cultural heritage*

May 2013



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### 1. UNIVERSITY

Southern Cross University (SCU)

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### 2. PARTNERS

Bundjalung Nation Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and Natural Resource Management Committee  
Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority, NSW Department of Environment and Conservation, National Parks and Wildlife Division

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### 3. REGIONAL CONTEXT

The Aboriginal people of the Bundjalung Nation are traditional custodians of the Northern Rivers region of NSW and have a rich cultural history inextricably linked to the landscape and the region's natural resources. With the passing of many Bundjalung Elders, the Aboriginal community is acutely aware of the urgent need to preserve its cultural heritage.

The Lismore campus of SCU is located in the Northern Rivers region. The University has academic staff and research students with expertise in natural resource management, geographic information systems (GIS), and cultural heritage management, collaborating with Indigenous communities, both in Australia and overseas, to preserve cultural heritage.

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### 4. DESCRIPTION

The Bundjalung Cultural Mapping Project focused on giving Indigenous communities a greater say on how their traditional lands are managed and preserving the wisdom of Elders in the Northern Rivers region. The Project was a joint venture between Southern Cross University, the Bundjalung Nation Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and Natural Resource Management Committee, Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority, and the then NSW Department of Environment and Conservation, National Parks and Wildlife Division.

The Project resulted in the creation of a highly secured, user-friendly computer-based record keeping system through which communities can record and thus own their cultural knowledge. The system is designed so that it can be administered and controlled by Indigenous communities, with important or significant information only able to be accessed by those persons delegated by the local Aboriginal community. Communities can record oral, visual and written histories, photographs, films and any other kind of digital media about their cultural places and landscapes and file them on the database for the benefit of future generations.

The University's researchers sourced and collected around 1,000 documents from the public domain and the system provides copies, where appropriate, and links to source information for the many Aboriginal communities of the Bundjalung/Yugambah language chain.

The underlying GIS system enables communities to generate a map of a chosen area of interest, utilising satellite images, and then identify culturally significant and sacred sites and record relevant cultural information including appropriate contact people within the Aboriginal community. With suitable security restrictions on confidential information, the system automatically transfers information to the NSW Government's Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS). The AHIMS is a key tool in ensuring that Aboriginal objects and places in NSW are protected under the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

SCU continues to host, support and maintain the underlying infrastructure of the GIS and record-keeping system.

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## 5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE REGION

The Cultural Mapping Project has empowered Aboriginal communities in the Northern Rivers region to preserve their cultural heritage and strengthen cultural knowledge and identity. The information collected is used and accessed by communities to assist with a range of initiatives, including the development of Aboriginal Heritage Management Plans, local and regional planning processes, and family or group history projects. For example, the knowledge recorded in Tweed Heads via the Project proved a key resource in allowing the Tweed community to put their case in the design and construction process of the Pacific Highway. The knowledge transferred to AHIMS is vitally important in ensuring that traditional objects and places of the Bundjalung Nation are respected and protected now and into the future.

The Project has deepened the University's academic expertise and experience in working with Indigenous peoples to preserve and secure their cultural heritage, enabling it to play a stronger role in meeting the distinctive knowledge needs of its region. The high-trust relationships that were established from the Project, for example, led to SCU's involvement in the recent repatriation of Bundjalung remains after 200 years in the Netherlands.<sup>1</sup>

In 2011, SCU was commissioned by the Australian Government to research Aboriginal fisheries in NSW, determining catch, cultural significance of species and traditional fishing knowledge needs. The study focused on the Tweed River catchment in partnership with the Minjungbal traditional owners. The project was influential in strengthening wider recognition of the role of Indigenous cultural fishing within State and Commonwealth fisheries policies and ensuring Indigenous input to the Fisheries R&D report '*Impact of management changes on the viability of Indigenous commercial fishers and the flow on effects to their communities: case study in NSW*'.

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## 6. NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES

The preservation of Indigenous cultural heritage and languages is of national significance, as is the repatriation from overseas of remains of Aboriginal people.

The Project has provided an exemplar model that can be applied and adapted for multiple uses nationally and internationally. To date, the University has provided Indigenous communities in Canada and the Solomon Islands with access to the model.

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## 7. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The University is currently exploring opportunities for making the cultural heritage mapping model available to communities in the Torres Strait, East Timor and Europe.

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## 8. FURTHER INFORMATION

<http://champ.scu.edu.au/>

Dr David Lloyd, School of Environment, Science and Engineering, SCU, Phone: 02 6626 9401

# CASE STUDY 11: USC Art Gallery and Public Art Collection

## *Providing a regional arts and education facility for the Sunshine Coast community*

May 2013



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### 1. UNIVERSITY

University of the Sunshine Coast (USC)

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### 2. PARTNERS

USC's Art Gallery partners with regional artists, local high schools and educational institutions, sponsors and community groups.

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### 3. REGIONAL CONTEXT

The Sunshine Coast region's vibrant arts scene is central to its regional identity and also represents an important feature of its attractiveness as a tourist destination. In addition, the creative industries are gaining increasing focus as an emerging regional industry.

USC is committed to playing a key role in the development of the Sunshine Coast, through the provision of regionally appropriate educational, social, cultural and economic development infrastructure. Since its inception, and with the first student intake in 1996, USC has developed an art collection focusing on contemporary Australian art with an emphasis on Queensland artists. The USC Gallery commenced an exhibition program in 1998 and a purpose-built gallery, funded completely by private donations, was opened in 2004.

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### 4. DESCRIPTION

The USC Art Gallery is situated in the heart of the University campus and is open free to the public Monday to Saturday from 10am-4pm. The Gallery has an education focus and delivers learning opportunities for USC students, primary, secondary and TAFE students, community groups and Sunshine Coast residents and visitors.

The Gallery hosts 11–13 exhibitions a year, focusing on contemporary art and design practice and frequently aligned with USC courses such as design, photography, education, cultural tourism, creative writing and the illustrated book, environmental management and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island studies. The annual exhibition program includes new media; design; photography; painting, drawing and sculpture; illustration; community and group exhibitions and two annual design student exhibitions. The regional community and visitors to the campus can view the University's public art collection, including a number of outstanding sculptures.

The University's holds a significant collection of Western and Central Desert Aboriginal art can be viewed around the campus and particularly in the Library and the Ngabung Djamga (*Gubbi Gubbi language meaning Mother Messenger*) Gallery. Enhanced by interpretive and educational materials, this group of works is one of the highlights of the USC art collection.

A Western Desert Art Collection Education Resource is currently available on-line for school teachers. In collaboration with lecturers and students from the discipline of Education, the Gallery is coordinating the Wondervision project to update and enhance the Resource to:

- Better fit the national curriculum using e-books, pdf formats and hard-copy post cards
- Develop appropriate social media exercises and tasks for school students, with a special focus on high school students.

In addition, through the Wondervision project, the Gallery is creating a series of archive-able broadcasts covering a range of visual and performing arts topics.

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## 5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE REGION

The University's art holdings represent the most significant public art collection in the region. The collection and exhibition program provide an educative function that engages with current art debate and themes of relevance to the region.

Each year, the Gallery attracts in the vicinity of 12,000 to 15,000 visitors, with 50 per cent of visitors from outside the University community, demonstrating the Gallery's wide appeal. Approximately 4,000 of these visitors are school students drawn from up to 60 schools on the Sunshine Coast region. In addition the Gallery supports local artists and artist groups, furthering the development of creative industries in the Sunshine Coast.

The Gallery plays a key role in facilitating the University's engagement with the Sunshine Coast community. By inviting residents and school students on campus to visit the Gallery and view its art collection, the University provides opportunities for the community to get to know the campus and gain an appreciation of USC's capabilities. It also assists in breaking down barriers to higher education participation.

The Gallery is supported by a team of 46 volunteers reflecting a strong support base in the regional community. The relationships with volunteers, patrons and the art community built and maintained by the Gallery have significant flow-on benefits for the University, including financial and in-kind support for a range of initiatives and projects, including student scholarships.

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## 6. NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES

The Gallery actively contributes to the vibrancy of the Sunshine Coast art scene by attracting and hosting visiting exhibitions that provide regional access to contemporary developments in art and new media occurring at the state, national and international levels.

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## 7. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

A recent donation of 107 artworks by nationally awarded architect John Mainwaring has taken the USC collection to a new level. With many Indigenous artists represented from around Australia, the collection takes on a special educational and cultural significance for the local community and international visitors alike. The new Sippy Downs Learning Hub will showcase many of the larger works and a second gallery or keeping place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island art is in the very early planning stages.

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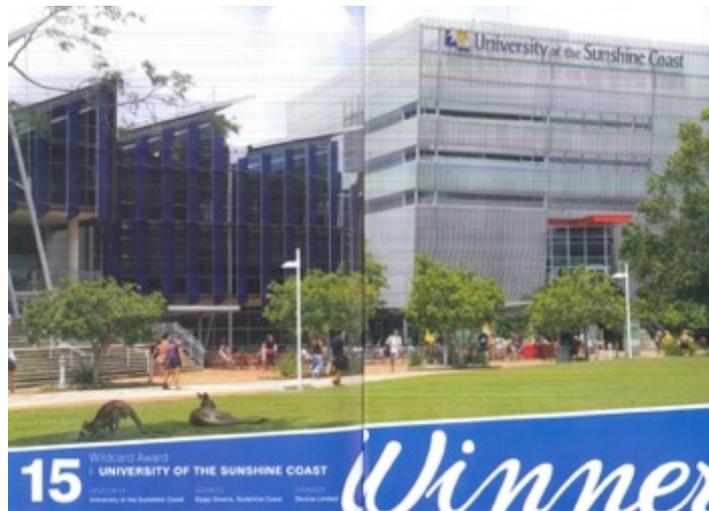
## 8. FURTHER INFORMATION

USC Art Gallery Webpages: <http://www.usc.edu.au/community/art-gallery/>  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/USCartgallery](http://www.facebook.com/USCartgallery)

# CASE STUDY 12: Environmental and Regional Sustainability

*Exemplifying sustainable development in the Sunshine Coast region*

May 2013



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## 1. UNIVERSITY

University of the Sunshine Coast (USC)

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## 2. PARTNERS

Sunshine Coast Environment Council  
Sunshine Coast Council

Sunshine Coast TAFE  
Urban Development Institute of Australia

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## 3. REGIONAL CONTEXT

The Sunshine Coast region is nationally recognised for its environmental value and the diversity of its ecosystems, and its agriculture, food, tourism and related industries are reliant on the quality of the local environment. With the region undergoing rapid development over the last two decades, there has been a clear need to protect and enhance the environment whilst still facilitating contemporary land uses.

USC has taken a leading role in environmental sustainability through its education and research programs, and has also used its own campus to exemplify how contemporary development can be sensitive to its environment. The catchment areas of the University's campuses and study centres encompass two UNESCO Biosphere Reserves (Noosa and Sandy Bay).

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## 4. DESCRIPTION

USC was established 17 years ago on a one hundred hectare site that was practically devoid of vegetation following its historical use for cane farming and animal grazing. The conscious decision was made that the University would commit itself to the highest levels of environmental and sustainability practice, both in the rehabilitation of the area and in the built environment.

The University's Master Plan, created in 1994, has a strong focus on ecological principles and landscape design and has remained the blueprint for campus development. A coordinated range of activities were subsequently put in place relating to flora and fauna, the management of water using cross terrain drainage and extensive recycling, and the specialist sub-tropical design of buildings,

which have won extensive awards for both passive and active energy conservation and for architectural merit.

USC is the only institution in Australia to have been awarded the Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) EnviroDevelopment standard in all six categories and it continues to maintain that level of accreditation. USC continues to have a very close working relationship with the UDIA and in late 2012 was awarded the prestigious quality award from the UDIA Queensland division.

USC also gives emphasis to environmental sustainability in its education programs: in addition to its Bachelor in Environmental Science, the University offers undergraduate students across most Faculties and programs the opportunity to undertake a four- or eight-course major in Sustainability as part of their degree. A Graduate Certificate in Sustainability was introduced in 2009 to satisfy strong regional industry demand for staff with skills and knowledge in issues such as sustainable resource management and climate change. A world-first Master of Climate Change Adaptation recently produced its first graduates.

The University's Sustainability Research Centre, with over 60 researchers and PhD students, focuses on the social dimension of environmental change and issues involving coastal management, climate change, water management, natural and cultural heritage, and community wellbeing. It undertakes research of regional, national and international significance. USC's contributions in this area include ownership and management of a research and learning centre on the world heritage listed Fraser Island.

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## **5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE REGION**

USC, through its exemplary physical campus development, education activities and Sustainability Research Centre, provides significant leadership and knowledge exchange opportunities within the Sunshine Coast region. It plays a key role in enabling the region to retain its environmental values in the context of continual tensions between the protection of the natural environment and rapid urban development.

In conjunction with its partners – Sunshine Coast Business Council, and Sunshine Coast TAFE – USC funds and operates the 'Sustainable Sunshine Coast portal', which provides contemporary information for Sunshine Coast households and businesses. In June each year, and in conjunction with the Sunshine Coast Environment Council, USC hosts World Environment Day – the largest single event held anywhere on the Sunshine Coast each year.

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## **6. NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES**

USC benchmarks its environmental management performance against other Australian universities and also links with overseas universities with a similar strategic focus.

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## **7. FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

The University's environmental and regional sustainability focus will continue to be central to the institution's identity, future development and regional, national and international contributions. USC has a Sustainability Advisory Committee (SAC) made up of senior representatives of the University and business leaders of the region and elsewhere, who provide important direction for further phases of this strategy.

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## **8. FURTHER INFORMATION**

Professor Mike Hefferan, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Engagement), [MHefferan@usc.edu.au](mailto:MHefferan@usc.edu.au), 07 5456 5169  
USC's sustainability initiatives: <http://www.usc.edu.au/university/about-usc/sustainability/>.  
Sustainable Sunshine Coast portal: <http://www.sustainablesunshinecoast.com.au/>

# CASE STUDY 13: Visualising Victoria's Groundwater

*Empowering water managers and land owners to sustainably manage water use and environmental flows*

May 2013



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## 1. UNIVERSITY

University of Ballarat (UB)

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## 2. PARTNERS

- Victorian Government – various Departments
- Australian National University
- Natural Resources Canada
- CSIRO
- Goulburn-Murray Water
- Southern Rural Water
- For information about other valued partners: see [http://www.vvg.org.au/cb\\_pages/partners.php](http://www.vvg.org.au/cb_pages/partners.php)

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## 3. REGIONAL CONTEXT

Until the commencement of the Visualising Victoria's Groundwater (VVG) project in 2011, Victoria's groundwater data was largely inaccessible, stored in various databases with only fractional information available via websites that were infrequently updated. The State Government supplied groundwater data to users on a quarterly basis via MS Access and Excel spreadsheets. More up-to-date data was only available to a select few via a password-protected portal. The inadequacies of Victoria's groundwater data were previously highlighted in an Auditor-General's report and several Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal 'Red Dot' decisions on groundwater allocations.

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## 4. DESCRIPTION

The \$2.2 million VVG project adapts new technologies and leverages high speed broadband capabilities to capture, aggregate and spatially depict Victoria's groundwater systems for public access via intuitive web portals. The interoperable VVG system offers real-time visualisation of data from over 275,000 bores by dynamically accessing information stored on disparate systems owned and managed by a diversity of State water managers and research agencies. It features sophisticated web mapping systems and web-based tools that incorporate 3D geological and hydrogeological models.

The VVG web portal provides users with the capability to model groundwater data 'on-the-fly'. Users can access:

- Graphs of time-series data
- Graphical representations of chemistry data
- Links to data records, images, documents, videos etc to enhance the breadth and depth of relevant data
- Graphic displays of borehole lithological, stratigraphic, hydrostratigraphic and bore construction logs
- Calculations of the depth to watertable
- Cross sections and 3D visualisations of aquifers.

Significantly, VVG also enables users to drill a virtual borehole at any point in the landscape and predict the groundwater parameters.

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## **5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE REGION**

The VVG project has transformed the current delivery of groundwater data, by making all data collected across Victoria publicly accessible.

UB is located within the Grampians region of Victoria, one of Australia's most productive agricultural regions. In the context of predicted future drier climatic conditions and population growth, regional strategic plans identify the sustainable management and use of water as a key priority. The VVG empowers water managers and others (including farmers, landowners and conservation groups), within the region and across Victoria, to make informed decisions about managing consumptive use and environmental water flows.

Since its launch in July 2012 access and usage of the VVG website has been strong, with 11,000 visits to the website (including 42% new visitors and 58% returning visitors), and nearly 23,000 page views.

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## **6. NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES**

The VVG project is a landmark project and the first of its kind in Australia. The UB research and technical team has been disseminating information about the project through State, National and International conference and forum presentations. The project has attracted an increasing number of peak national and international research and government bodies as partners, including Natural Resources Canada.

In recognition of the innovative work being undertaken in the VVG project, the University and CSIRO have also been invited by the international Open Geospatial Consortium to participate in the development and trialing of the ISO standard for groundwater data transfer. Other participants include the Geological Surveys of Canada, US, NZ and European countries.

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## **7. FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

Plans are in place to further enhance VVG's visualisation, graphics and interoperability features. Work has also commenced on developing mobile applications that will empower users to access site-specific predictions of the groundwater properties 'beneath their feet'.

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## **8. FURTHER INFORMATION**

Visualising Victoria's Groundwater website: [www.vvg.org.au](http://www.vvg.org.au)  
Dr Helen Thompson, UB Centre for eCommerce and Communications, [h.thompson@ballarat.edu.au](mailto:h.thompson@ballarat.edu.au), 03 5327 9418

## CASE STUDY 14: Sustain Northern Rivers

### *Regional collaboration for action on climate change*

May 2013



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#### 1. UNIVERSITY

Southern Cross University (SCU)

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#### 2. PARTNERS

SCU is one of 26 peak regional organisations in the Sustain Northern Rivers (SNR) Collaboration, including TAFE, Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers, Councils, State Government Departments, community organisations, youth and natural resource agencies.

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#### 3. REGIONAL CONTEXT

With its World Heritage recognised rainforests, the Northern Rivers (NR) region of NSW has the highest biodiversity in the State and the third highest in Australia. This biodiversity, together with the region's coastal and marine areas, make it a key tourism destination. The region's natural assets enable strong agriculture, fishing and forestry industries and there are increasing levels of organic production, together with a growing reputation for high quality foods and regional cuisine. The NR community has a very strong sustainability ethos and new 'green industries' are emerging. High population growth, development pressures and land management practices, however, are significantly impacting the region's biodiversity. The region is also in the frontline of the impact of climate variability and change, with detrimental impacts predicted for key regional industries, infrastructure, community health and safety.<sup>4</sup>

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#### 4. DESCRIPTION

In 2008, eight NR peak organisations formed an alliance to communicate, consult and collaborate for action on climate change. This alliance has since grown to 26 members and is now known as the SNR Collaboration. It seeks to build social capital and respond to issues for householders, small, medium and large businesses and community enterprises.

SNR has developed a successful and innovative collaborative model, based on distributed leadership, with the recognition that no one organisation has the mandate or resources to deal with all of the interrelated complexities involved in responding to climate change. To date, SNR has established three major programs of collaborative activity:

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<sup>4</sup> Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers (2011). *Northern Rivers Regional Plan 2011: Vision to 2020*

- *Sustain Food* – aimed at securing a sustainable food future for the region by increasing capacity for growing affordable, nutritional and accessible food locally and mitigating climate change impacts of food production, distribution and consumption.
- *Sustain Transport* – addressing the region’s high dependency on car transport and vulnerability to increased fuel costs with the aim of reducing transport emissions, increasing transport options, and increasing physical activity, social capital and resilience.
- *Sustain Energy* – focusing on reducing the region’s dependence on external energy sources, and increasing sustainable practices in energy generation, transmission and consumption.

As a founding member of SNR, SCU has demonstrated ongoing and significant leadership in: the provision of expert advice on the development of collaborative governance, member roles and processes; strategic planning; the provision of secretariat roles facilitating core functions; and, the convening of working groups to achieve project outcomes. In 2011, SCU hosted a Complexity Leadership Course for 40 senior managers from the region that focused on developing capacity for distributed leadership, adaptive management and collaboration in SNR partner organisations.

In collaboration with SNR partners, SCU has identified strategic priorities for research and education projects. SCU is well placed to contribute expertise to SNR: in 2012, its research strengths in Earth Science, Geochemistry, Agricultural Science, Crop and Pasture Production and Forestry Sciences were assessed by the Australian Research Council to be ‘well above world standard’. In support of *Sustain Food*, SCU has established a Regional Food Research Network bringing together food systems researchers from across a diversity of academic fields.

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## 5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE REGION

SNR has provided the Northern Rivers region with a successful collaborative approach to address the ‘wicked problems’ of climate change and sustainability. The Collaboration has successfully attracted substantial external funding to progress key regional projects and achieve tangible outcomes of benefit to regional industries and communities. It has become the ‘network of networks’ in the region and the focal point for regional consultation and coordination.

Under the *Sustain Transport* program, for example, the Northern Rivers Carpool developed and at April 2012, had 1,300 people registered to share their journeys travelling to work or study. Under the *Sustain Energy* program, two major projects are currently being conducted: skill requirements for securing the region’s future energy sustainability; and, a bioenergy scoping study.

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## 6. NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES

The SNR Collaboration provides an exemplary model for building regional social capital, facilitating innovation and enhancing regional resilience. SCU plays a key role in widely disseminating the model, through national and international research publications and forums. Other regions are adopting SNR innovations: for example, four regions across Australia have now adopted the Northern Rivers Carpool model.

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## 7. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

A fourth program, *Sustain Biodiversity*, is being developed to focus on protecting the region’s biodiversity for the benefit of local industries, the community and future generations. SCU will align its world class research strengths in environment science with this emerging network.

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## 8. FURTHER INFORMATION

<http://www.sustainnorthernrivers.org/>

Ben Roche, Head of Sustainability, Partnerships and Community Engagement, SCU, 02 6620 3150

# CASE STUDY 15: Flexible and Innovative Solutions for Meeting Industry Skill Needs in Central Queensland

May 2013



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## 1. UNIVERSITY

CQUniversity Australia

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## 2. PARTNERS

BHP Billiton Mitsubishi Alliance  
AngloCoal  
Xstrata Coal  
Mackay Area Industry Network  
John Holland Group  
Other industry partners

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## 3. REGIONAL CONTEXT

Mining and related industries in Central Queensland have been facing massive knowledge and skill shortages as a result of the ongoing “resources and infrastructure boom”. In addition to shortages in geoscience, mining and engineering, in 2011, the Mackay Area Industry Network (MAIN) Cooperative Ltd identified an urgent need for sophisticated project management skills to secure the successful delivery of billion dollar projects within the Central Queensland region.

The industry faces three key barriers to addressing skill shortages:

- Young people perceive little need to undertake tertiary qualifications as the boom conditions have increased the availability of well-paid unskilled employment opportunities.
- Workers employed on mine or similar sites are typically unable to progress their qualifications without having to pause their careers and halt their income stream.
- Educational programs geared to the specific needs of the resource and infrastructure sectors have not been readily available.

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## 4. DESCRIPTION

CQUniversity has been partnering with industry peak bodies and individual companies to provide rapid, innovative and tailored solutions for addressing skill shortages. Examples are briefly described below.

- In April 2011, the University assembled a rapid-response team to fast-track the development of a flexibly delivered project and program management program, with qualifications available at

Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma and Masters levels. The program has a resources and infrastructure focus, equipping graduates for work within the region, nationally and internationally.

- In partnership with BHP Billiton Mitsubishi Alliance (BMA) and AngloCoal, the University has custom-designed a range of Associate Degrees, delivered by distance education, that meet the specific and urgent needs of industry for para-professionals to work alongside engineers and other professionals. Students undertake full-time cadetships, enabling them to work full-time, complete their qualifications on site with financial and other support from their employers, and reap the benefits of workplace-integrated learning. The University offers Associate Degrees in: Geoscience; Mine Technology; and, Mine Operations Management (with separate Surface and Underground specialisations).
- The University has also partnered with a private training provider to enable mine workers with Certificate III qualifications (the highest qualification for many workers in the mining sector) to complete a Diploma in Mining by distance, with articulation into the University's Associate Degree programs.
- In collaboration with Xstrata Coal Newlands Mine in the Bowen Basin, the University has designed a customised Graduate Certificate in Management for delivery onsite, articulating into a Graduate Diploma in Mining Management and then into an MBA or a Masters in Management (Engineering). Students can choose tailored elective units of study, including Mining Law and Project Management for Mining, Plant and Owners of Large Assets.
- CQUniversity's Bachelor of Engineering (Co-op)/Diploma of Professional Practice program features two six-month paid work placements as well as project-based learning, enabling students to develop the technical and professional skills required to work as an engineer in real-life contexts and graduate with one year of industry experience.
- The John Holland Group and CQUniversity have launched the Engineers for the Future program which embeds industry relevant lectures from practising John Holland professionals into all levels of the CQUniversity Engineering undergraduate program.

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## **5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE REGION**

Through its flexible and innovative approach to meeting industry skill needs, CQUniversity is contributing to the prosperity of Central Queensland, enhancing employment opportunities for Central Queensland regional communities, and building the regional skill base.

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## **6. NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES**

CQUniversity has led the establishment of a Central Queensland Branch of the Project Management Institute (PMI) of Queensland - PMI is the leading international professional association for project managers. The coordinator of the University's project management program was awarded the PMI's Distinguished Contribution Award in 2012. In a first for regional Australia, CQUniversity has also recently facilitated two Project Management Professional Workshops, one in Gladstone and one in Mackay. In addition, the sitting of Central Queensland Project Managers for the Project Management International (PMI) certification exam was conducted in Rockhampton. CQUniversity hosted all 3 events and with places limited to 20 participants; each event was fully booked.

The concept of Associate Degrees for meeting the needs of the resources and related sectors has gained favour and CQUniversity is now partnering with companies across Australia and, increasingly internationally, to deliver its programs. The University is currently playing a critically important role in the Minerals Industry National Associate Degree Project managed by the Minerals Council of Australia.

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## **7. FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

The University is continuing to build close partnerships with the resources, energy and transport industries to ensure the alignment of its educational programs with industry needs within Central Queensland, nationally and internationally.

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## **8. FURTHER INFORMATION**

Director, Queensland Centre for Professional Development, CQUniversity, Phone: 07 4923 2036

## CASE STUDY 16: Queensland College of Wine Tourism

*Providing specialist education, training and research to support a key regional industry*

May 2013



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### 1. UNIVERSITY

University of Southern Queensland (USQ)

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### 2. PARTNERS

- Queensland Department of Education and Training
- Stanthorpe State High and other Gateway Schools
- Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE (SQIT)
- One Step Further (RTO)
- Vintessential Laboratories
- Wine Industry and Tourism associations

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### 3. REGIONAL CONTEXT

While overseas exports are increasing, most wine produced in Queensland is sold domestically. Wine tourism is an important and rapidly growing sector within the industry, benefiting cellar door wineries, tour operators, gift shops, restaurants and accommodation providers. The State Government and the wine industry recognise the importance of world standard education, training and research in securing the sector's national and international reputation for quality.

The Queensland Granite Belt is a premier wine producing area with wine production in and around Stanthorpe representing more than 60% of all Queensland production. The region is home to almost 50 winery cellar doors.

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### 4. DESCRIPTION

The Queensland College of Wine Tourism (QCWT) is a joint venture between the Department of Education and Training and the University of Southern Queensland. The state-of-the-art \$8.5 million experiential education and training facility for the Queensland wine tourism industry opened in 2007.

In partnership with the USQ, SQIT, Stanthorpe State High School and other schools across Queensland, the College provides training from secondary to tertiary levels in viticulture, oenology, wine knowledge and appreciation, wine tourism, hospitality and business, and supports the delivery of USQ's Bachelor of Technology (Wine). The Centre manages and delivers the Wine, Food and

Tourism Gateway Schools program – a key industry-school engagement program of Skills Queensland – to 14 affiliated schools. The Centre's education and training programs are developed in collaboration with the wine tourism industry.

The College incorporates a teaching vineyard, fully equipped 20 tonne teaching winery, hospitality training kitchen, laboratories and classrooms. The award winning Varias Restaurant, Conference & Function Centre, together with the Banca Ridge Vineyard & Cellar Door, are open to the public from 10:00am to 3:00pm, 7 days a week. All facilities provide a commercial education and training context for students of the College and the Banca Ridge wines are made by students in the teaching winery.

Through its partnership with Vintessential Laboratories, QCWT provides the only commercial grape and wine analysis service north of Melbourne, delivering significant benefits to winemakers within the local region and extending into other areas of Queensland and NSW.

USQ Faculty of Science staff members undertake research and extension on behalf of the wine industry. In 2012, they completed nine publications, provided industry presentations and played advisory roles on key industry bodies. Recent research projects have included: developing a yeast for optimising Verdelho wine production in the Granite Belt; and, determining optimal cropping densities for growing Merlot grapes in the region.

Since January 2012, the USQ Student Centre located at QCWT has been providing a full range of student services including: academic and enrolment support for existing and prospective USQ students; and, blended learning delivery of the USQ Tertiary Preparation Program (TPP). In 2012, QCWT facilitated wine tourism industry personnel and other community members to enrol in higher education programs from tertiary preparation to Doctorate level.

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## 5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE REGION

The QCWT makes a significant contribution to the regional and Queensland wine tourism industry. The Centre: enables industry and regional sustainability through specialised education, training and up-skilling, research and extension; introduces hundreds of secondary school students to careers in wine tourism and hospitality; and, supports industry and regional development through the provision of services such as grape and wine analysis.

Consistent with its mission, the Centre itself acts as tourist and visitor attraction in the Granite Belt region. In 2012, around 19,000 patrons visited the Centre, with an estimated 60% of participants from outside the Granite Belt, and the College hosted over 50 significant industry, government and corporate events, providing a significant boost to the region.

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## 6. NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES

The College is an Approved Provider for the international Wine & Spirit Trust (WSET) and delivers WSET accredited education in wine and spirits. The Centre has hosted visiting students from the Napa Valley wine region in California.

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## 7. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The QCWT Strategic Plan articulates the vision for QCWT to continue to develop as a thriving, innovative centre for excellence in wine-based experience and expertise, recognised at regional, national and international levels.

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## 8. FURTHER INFORMATION

QCWT website: <http://www.qcwt.com.au/>

John Neville, Chief Executive Officer, QCWT, [john.neville@usq.edu.au](mailto:john.neville@usq.edu.au)

## CASE STUDY 17: UB Technology Park

*Creating a knowledge precinct to stimulate regional business innovation and employment growth*

May 2013



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### 1. UNIVERSITY

University of Ballarat (UB)

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### 2. PARTNERS

- IBM Aust/NZ
- Victorian State Revenue Office
- Ambulance Victoria
- ID Research
- Emergency Services Telecommunication Authority
- Over 20 early stage and emerging businesses

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### 3. REGIONAL CONTEXT

Ballarat boasts a proud history and enviable lifestyle opportunities. However, as with many other regional centres, the former gold rush town faces a constant challenge in building a diverse and resilient economy and offering attractive career opportunities for its young people.

In 1995, the University of Ballarat formed a groundbreaking partnership with the City of Ballarat and the Victorian State Government to establish a Technology Park aimed at stimulating business start-up and growth and attracting large-scale organisations to the region.

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### 4. DESCRIPTION

The UB Technology Park is a prestigious 29 hectare site, easily accessible from Melbourne, Geelong and Bendigo. It is set in a park-like environment adjacent to the University's Mt Helen Campus and seven kilometres from the Ballarat city centre. The Park offers 25,000 m<sup>2</sup> of office space across nine buildings, and has more than 30 enterprises and 1,500 staff currently located at the Park. The University owns all land and buildings within the Park.

The Centre caters to established large-scale organisations, early-stage technology focused businesses, and small-to-medium sized innovative technology enterprises. The Park provides its tenants with: high-quality fibre optics and network facilities specifically designed to support ICT companies and the ICT functions of major corporations; quality office space; access to business mentoring; assistance with identifying commercial business opportunities; and, support with government relations and accessing government funding.

Building on its longstanding relationship with UB, IBM has been a key 'anchor' tenant since the Park's establishment and now houses around 740 staff across three buildings, with plans to increase to 1,000 staff within three years. Important collaborations with the University include:

- The Internet Commerce Security Laboratory (ICSL), established in 2008, and a partnership between UB, IBM, Westpac, the Government of Victoria and the Australian Federal Police. The focus of the ICSL is on addressing critical Internet security issues for Australian businesses and consumers, particularly financial institutions and users of Internet banking and financial services.
- The 'Earn as You Learn Program', that allows UB students to combine their ICT studies with practical work experience with IBM. Students of the Program receive a scholarship from IBM and attend courses on industry awareness and industry application, which are delivered by UB in association with IBM staff.
- Employment of graduates and students – at least half of IBM's current workforce in Ballarat is made up of either graduates or current students of the University.

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## 5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE REGION

The Technology Park's role in attracting enterprises to Ballarat, stimulating business start-up and growth, creating jobs and retaining young people in the region, has led to the Park's strong ongoing support from key regional bodies. Every job created in the Ballarat Technology Park creates another job in the region, and approximately 80 per cent of UB's ICT graduates now stay within the Ballarat region after graduating.

The Park also significantly enhances opportunities for knowledge exchange between University researchers and business enterprises and supports the University in producing graduates with the job-readiness to make an immediate contribution to the regional economy.

A 2009 economic impact analysis estimated that, within Ballarat, the Technology Park accounts for around \$296 million in output, \$181 million in GRP and \$97 million in household income. It also contributes 1,731 FTE jobs to the economy of Ballarat, which in turn equates to a contribution of approximately 4.8 per cent of FTE employment in Ballarat. The Technology Park makes up 4.4 per cent of the economy of Ballarat. The Park has an even greater economic impact across the Central Highlands and Wimmera regions.

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## 6. NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES

UB Technology Park is the largest regional Technology Park in Australia. A recent independent report by IT advisory firm capioIT concluded that Ballarat is the number one location for the establishment of IT and business process delivery centres in Australia. The University's leadership in working collaboratively with industry, state and local governments to establish the Technology Park was highlighted as setting a clear industry benchmark.

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## 7. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Twenty-two hectares of land has been identified for Park expansion over the next 10 years, with plans for 11 major building developments and office accommodation for another 1,500 employees. With assistance from the State Government, UB will also extend the Park to central Ballarat at its SMB campus to accommodate a new major tenant providing employment opportunities for an additional 220 employees.

Aligned with research and academic strengths of the University, and emerging industries, the Park will focus on attracting companies working in information technology, bio technologies and renewable energy technologies.

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## 8. FURTHER INFORMATION

UB Technology Park website: <http://www.ubtp.com.au/index.php>  
Mal Vallance, Director, Technology Park, [m.vallance@ballarat.edu.au](mailto:m.vallance@ballarat.edu.au), 03 5327 989

# CASE STUDY 18: Innovation Centre Sunshine Coast

## *Supporting the start-up and growth of innovative businesses*

May 2013



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### 1. UNIVERSITY

University of the Sunshine Coast (USC)

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### 2. PARTNERS

The Innovation Centre (IC) receives funding and sponsorship from USC, the Queensland Government, Suncorp Bank and a range of commercial partners, and also utilises the significant experience of its Business Mentor Panel members who provide pro-bono advice to IC clients.

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### 3. REGIONAL CONTEXT

The Sunshine Coast economy relies heavily on its tourism, retail and construction industries. Despite having 32,400 businesses in 2012, it has been widely acknowledged, over the last 20 years, that major efforts are needed to create new employment opportunities by diversifying the economy, supporting the growth of knowledge-based businesses and producing the graduates and skills required to sustain those businesses. The dominance of traditional economic sectors, however, has proven highly resistant to change and the need to foster regional innovation remains of critical importance to the future sustainability and wellbeing of the region.

The establishment of USC at Sippy Downs in 1996, with around 60,000 graduates planned for the following 20 years, represented a key regional milestone in addressing the region's needs for knowledge-based skills. In 2002, the University committed to establishing an IC to foster innovation and enterprise development in the Sunshine Coast region.

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### 4. DESCRIPTION

The IC is a wholly owned, not-for-profit company of USC with an independent Board, and aims to create new jobs in new industries for the Sunshine Coast. The IC has become a focal point for innovation in the region, proactively supporting start-up and high growth businesses wanting to take their ideas to market. Currently, the IC houses 29 businesses and 3 virtual businesses (Associate Members), employing 142 people.

The IC has developed a suite of services including: provision of high calibre office/ coworking space, technology and facilities for clients; a full-time Entrepreneur in Residence; business coaching and

mentoring programs for entrepreneurial start-ups and high growth companies; brokerage of R&D partnerships between USC and businesses; support for established businesses through IC events, workshops and an Associate Membership program; access to USC students and staff through work placements; and, linkages to sources of finance, market intelligence and technology expertise.

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## 5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE REGION

Between 2002 and 2013, the IC has supported the start-up and growth of over 100 knowledge economy businesses, creating more than 450 jobs in a variety of sectors, including: digital; clean technology; life sciences; health; and, creative industries. The IC has assisted clients to raise capital (over \$33million in seed, venture capital and \$800,000 in AusIndustry grants) and has helped establish the Sunshine Coast as a growing hub for successful high growth companies.

IC clients, such as Typefi, Future Oceans, Traffika, Future Plus Environmental, Aquiba, Massey Online, Nano-Nouvelle, Optii Solutions, e-Learning and e-Content Management, have also made a solid contribution to the regional economy. Based on IC client exit interviews and surveys, it is estimated that without the IC and its unique environment, 78% of IC client companies would have been established in, or eventually relocated to, capital cities such as Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne.

Over 90% of the total IC client base remain operational and have formed viable, successful companies, many of which are competing on the world stage. This is an extremely positive outcome, given that the US-based National Business Incubation Association 2012 benchmark for start-up companies still operational after 5 years is 75%<sup>5</sup>, and in Australia, ABS data suggests just over 50% of new businesses in Australia fail within four years<sup>6</sup>.

Approximately 8,200 people have also benefited from IC business education events on key topics such as 'Managing R&D', 'Entrepreneurial Leadership' and 'Going Global'.

By fostering work-integrated learning opportunities for USC students with IC clients, the Centre is contributing to the work-readiness of graduates and enhancing their understanding of the business innovation process.

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## 6. NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES

The IC is a member of the National Business Incubator Association (based in the US) and AngelList (connecting start-ups with angel funding) and works closely with other innovation centres in Australia and New Zealand as well as private incubators in the SEQ region. The IC was recognised as an 'Innovation Hotspot' by CNBC Business in July 2010 and featured in a European business magazine with 650,000 readers.

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## 7. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

With the \$2.2 billion world-class health and medical precinct (Kawana Health Campus) now under construction, the IC is working to attract and assist innovative health, science and technology related start-ups and high growth companies. USC, IC and the State Government are currently considering 'hospital of the future services' and related opportunities.

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## 8. FURTHER INFORMATION

Mark Paddenburg, CEO - Innovation Centre Sunshine Coast Pty Ltd, Phone: 07 5450 2600, e: [mark@innovationcentre.com.au](mailto:mark@innovationcentre.com.au) w: [www.innovationcentre.com.au](http://www.innovationcentre.com.au)

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<sup>5</sup> National Business Incubation Association 2012 Benchmark Report noted in Feb2013 e-newsletter

<sup>6</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics and ABS data suggests just over half of new businesses in Australia fail within four years. This may represent an inflated figure as the GFC occurred within the research's sample period (2007 to 2011).