



Charles Sturt
University



Government Relations
and External Engagement
Annual Report 2024

Acknowledgement of Country

We respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the lands and waters on which we live and work together.

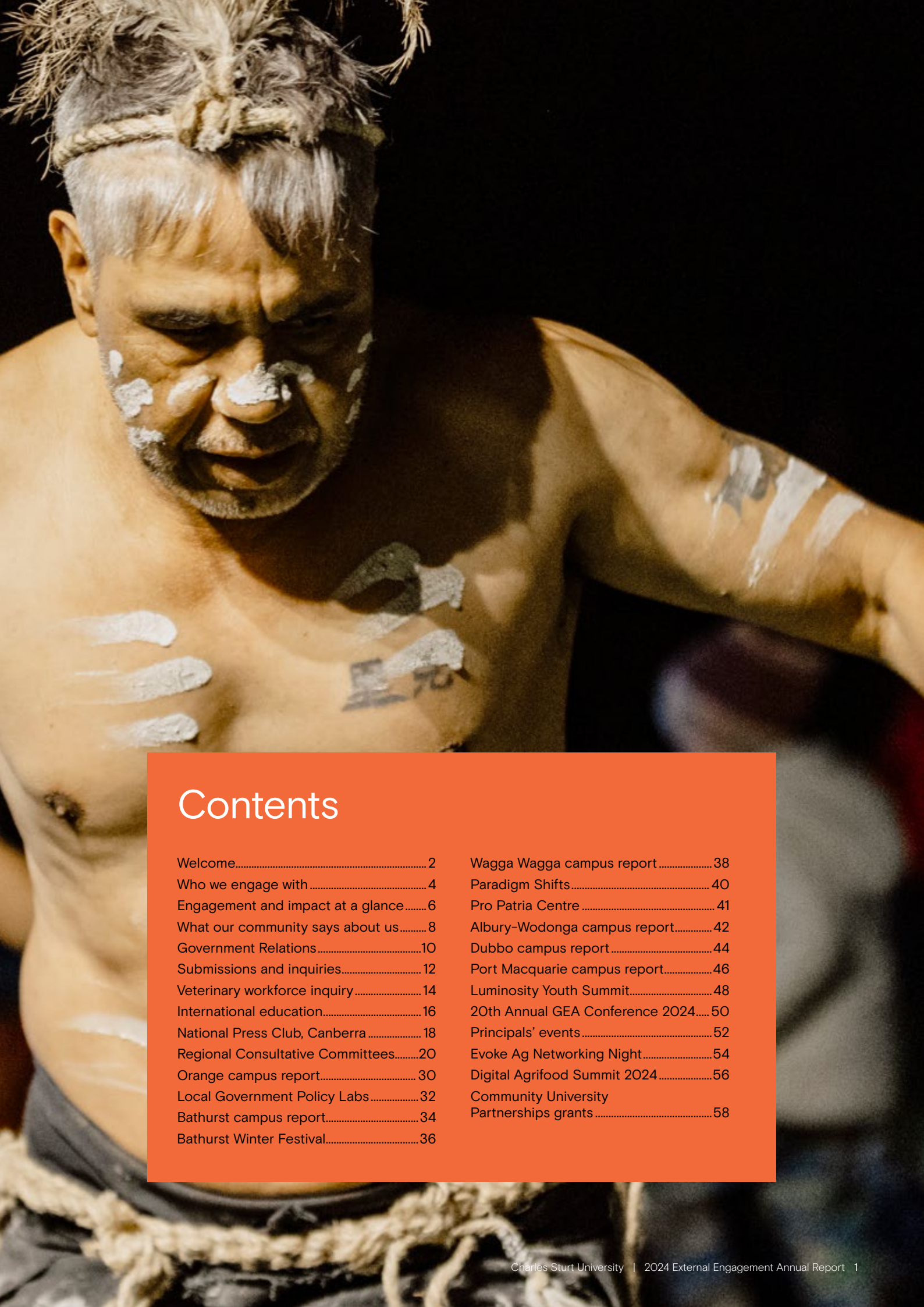
Charles Sturt University and its staff pay respect to Elders within First Nations communities and acknowledge the continuity of cultures, languages, leadership and knowledge systems.

We acknowledge First Nations peoples' continuous connection to Country, recognising the unique, diverse identities and cultures of peoples in our communities, regions and nation.

As such, we value the collaboration to strongly position First Nations peoples in our university, through languages, leadership, cultures, knowledges, research and ceremonies.

Cover: The Hon Chris Minns MP, Premier of NSW and Mr Phil Donato MP, Member for Orange with dentistry students on the Orange campus

Above: Bhaan Dance Group performing at the Sky Stories event on the Orange campus



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Welcome

From the Head of Government Relations and Regional Engagement

What a year 2024 has been for the Government Relations and External Engagement teams! We have connected, collaborated and conquered new challenges and opportunities, further strengthening our position as a trusted partner across all levels of government and within our communities.

Our efforts have been validated with an outstanding NPS Survey result of +72, a clear reflection of the positive impact we've had on our stakeholder relationships. We've delivered over 1,200 engagement activities from face-to-face meetings, MP visits and staff events to business roundtables.

This year, we navigated a dynamic landscape, addressing ongoing sector challenges, including the capping of international student numbers and the evolving outcomes from the Universities Accord. These were complex issues, but we remained focused and agile in our response, ensuring that Charles Sturt's voice is heard and our interests – and those of our regions – are well-represented.

We also celebrated several milestones, notably the launch of our Biosecurity Hub in the nation's capital at the National Press Club. It was a privilege to collaborate with the Gulbali Institute on this event as they continue to safeguard our nation from some of the most pressing biosecurity threats.

The Directors of External Engagement have been at the forefront of rejuvenating our Regional Consultative Committees, spearheading engagement events, and maintaining their crucial role as the 'front door' for our regions. Julia, James, Kate, and David – what a ride this has been! Thank you for your passion, commitment and leadership.

I am incredibly thankful for our Community Relations Officers, who are at the heart of our team. Their unwavering dedication to organising community events and providing essential support to our Directors of External Engagement is truly invaluable.

A special thank you to Rob O'Connor, whose guidance in government relations has kept the team focused on all matters related to education policy. His ability to craft insightful submissions and navigate the complexities of government priorities has been instrumental to our success.

Lisa Stout and Jo Kimber, you are the backbone of our operations – your support and expertise have ensured that we remain aligned and focused on our collective goals. I couldn't ask to work with more capable people than you both!

As my time at Charles Sturt comes to a close (with a tear in my eye), I want to express my deep gratitude to the team for your unwavering support and commitment. I've been truly blessed to work alongside a talented group of individuals, whose dedication continues to ensure that Charles Sturt is connected to our regions, and that our regions thrive and prosper.

To Tom Burton – without a doubt, the best leader and friend anyone could ask for. I have every confidence he will continue to lead this team with vision, passion and dedication, driving Charles Sturt toward even greater achievements.

Finally, I hope you enjoy the highlights of our year, thoughtfully compiled by Emma McMahon – truly a superstar in every way!



Sam Beresford
Head of Government Relations
and Regional Engagement



Emma McMahon, Lisa Stout, Sam Beresford and Jo Kimber

Who we engage with



Our purpose

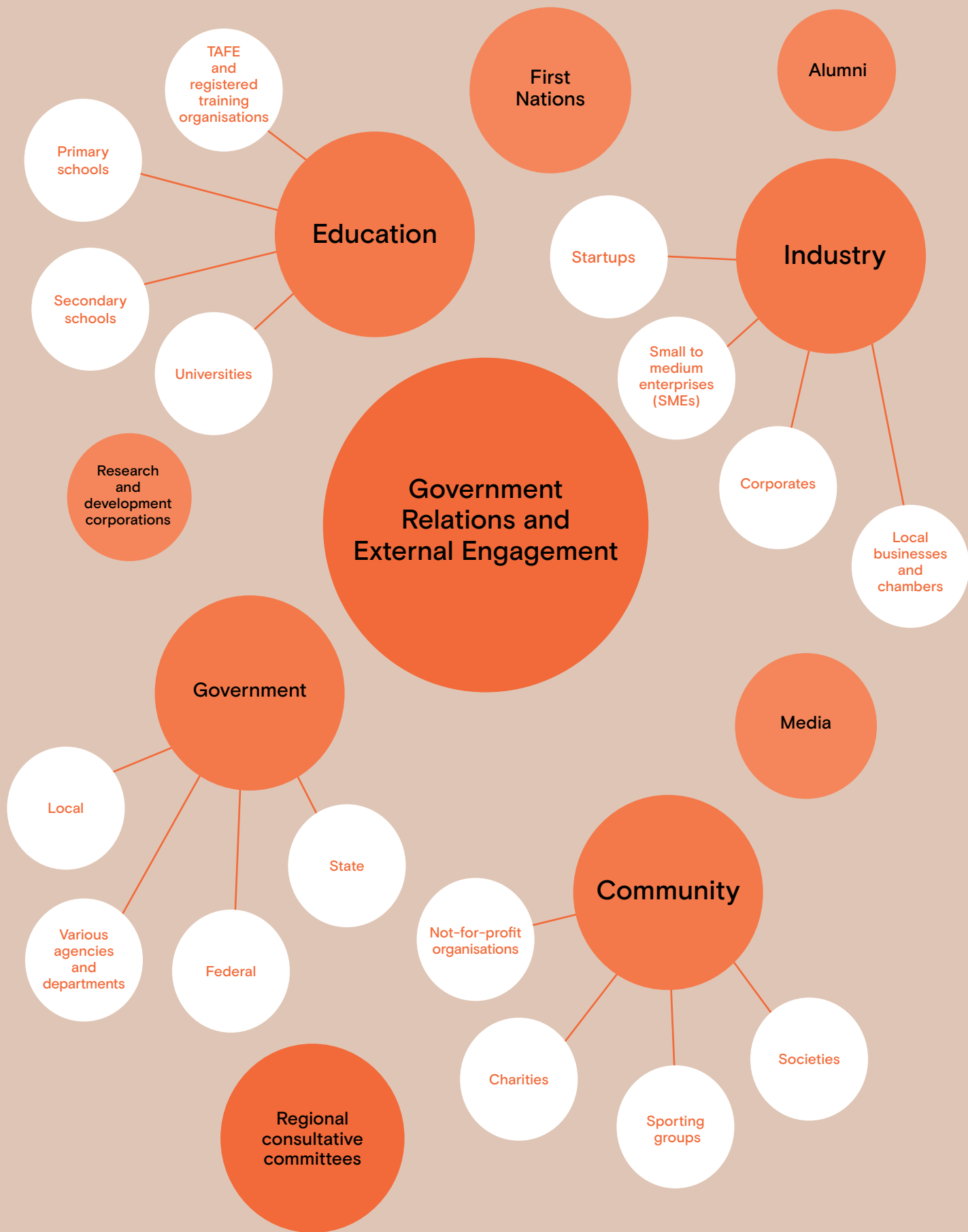
The External Engagement and Government Relations teams serve as vital connectors that bridge the university with our communities and an expansive network of stakeholders.

Given that universities can often be complex and bureaucratic institutions, our primary objective is to facilitate cross-collaboration and establish, maintain and foster mutually beneficial relationships. By doing so, we aim to bring the outside world in, to ensure Charles Sturt meets the needs of our communities and is recognised as an anchor institution in our regions.

Internal engagement

To engage effectively with community, industry and government, we build relationships within the university and engage with colleagues and students across all faculties and divisions.

Government Relations and External Engagement



Engagement and impact at a glance



1,206

Total engagements

Our locations

- Albury-Wodonga
- Bathurst
- Dubbo
- Orange
- Port Macquarie
- Wagga Wagga

768



Business/industry discussions



298

Tier one stakeholder discussions



98

Events

12



Staff events

30



MP and government visits

- Thought leadership
- Community and cultural gatherings
- Campus showcases



An evening with Barrie Cassidy at the Riverina Playhouse, pictured Sam Beresford, Barrie Cassidy, Vickie Burkinshaw and David Bardos



Explorer and environmental scientist Dr Tim Jarvis AM, guest speaker at the Digital Agrifood Summit



What our community says about us

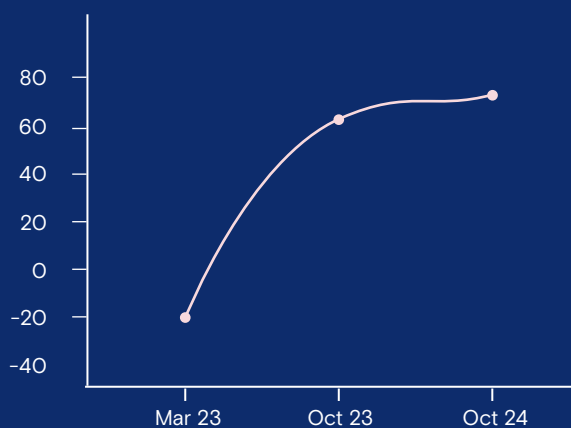
In regional Australia, a university is more than an educational institution – it is often a central component of community wellbeing and regional opportunity.

For Charles Sturt University, stakeholders play a significant role in being the key connection between the university and the community in which we operate.

With this in mind, Charles Sturt undertakes a regular community pulse check, to gain a deeper understanding of community stakeholder sentiment towards the university.

Below are the outcomes from our most recent survey that demonstrate our ongoing dedication in ensuring that we meet the needs and expectations of our community.

Net promoter score trendline uplift over the past two years

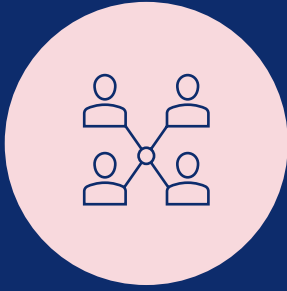


“The Charles Sturt team provide highly effective and meaningful engagement that results in positive outcomes.”

Direct quote from participant in survey

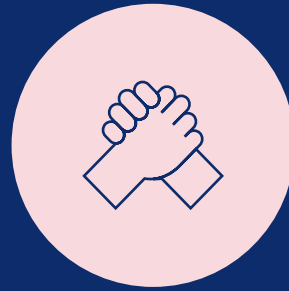
“The relationship is symbiotic and the relevance of having a progressive university for regional students is an incredible asset for our business and our community.”

Direct quote from participant in survey



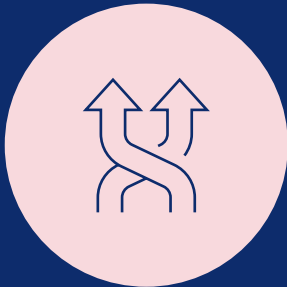
Forming connections

90% of our community stakeholders have interacted with the university in the last three months.



Strong relationships

70% of our community stakeholders have had a relationship with the university for more than three years.



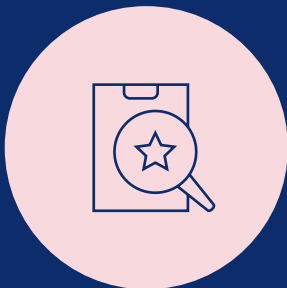
Ongoing interactions

97% of our community stakeholders would like to continue interacting with the university.



Customer loyalty

72% of our community would be extremely likely to recommend the university.



Customer experiences

91% of the community had a good to very good experience when interacting with the university.



Customer satisfaction

+72 Net Promoter Score (NPS).

Government Relations

Two key focuses for the Government Relations team this year were the Australian Universities Accord and international education.

The final report from the Australian Universities Accord was released in March 2024. It contained 47 recommendations, many of which would benefit Charles Sturt and our students and stakeholders. For example, the Accord recommends a funding model that would include loading to meet the costs of providing quality higher education in regional areas and more resources to help disadvantaged students attend – and succeed – at university.

The Government's initial response to the Accord's recommendations, announced with the 2024-25 Federal Budget, prioritised reducing the financial impact of study for many students. This was followed by the launch of consultations on a new funding model, student support programs, a National Student Ombudsman and other initiatives underpinned by legislation introduced to Parliament in the second half of the year.

Many of the Accord's recommendations were tied to the establishment of a new oversight and coordinating body, the Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC). The Government has decided to defer action on some crucial issues, such as undoing the damage created by the Job-ready Graduates scheme, until it gets advice from ATEC. While the university supported the creation of a body like ATEC in our submissions to the Accord, it is disappointing that we will have to wait another 18 months or more to begin exploring responses to many of the challenges facing universities.

In recent months, we have also been grappling with the Government's decision to cap international student commencement numbers. One of our key messages to the Government – and the Opposition, who support caps – is that the revenue from international students is essential for supporting core activities like teaching and learning for domestic students, research, and support services, since all of these have long been underfunded in Australia's higher education policy framework.

On this issue and the implementation of the Accord, the university has engaged with the Government, the Opposition and cross-benchers, the Department of Education, and various Parliamentary committees in an effort to ensure the best possible outcomes for Charles Sturt, our students and staff, and regional communities. This work has included responses to discussion papers and consultations, submissions to Parliamentary inquiries, and discussions with Ministers, MPs and Senators.



The Hon Kristy McBain MP and veterinarian students on the Wagga Wagga campus

Senator David Sharma discussing biosecurity research with Dr Justin Roby



Dr Joe McGirr MP visiting the Wagga Wagga campus



Senator Perin Davey with South Australian of the Year and explorer Dr Tim Jarvis AM

We welcomed and engaged with multiple government representatives across our regional and metropolitan footprint.

State

Premier of NSW, the Hon Chris Minns MP

Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales

The Hon Steve Whan MP, Member for Monaro, Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education.

The Hon Tara Moriarty MLC, Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western NSW

The Hon Anoulack Chanthivong MP, Member for Macquarie Fields, Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building and Minister for Corrections

The Hon Ryan Park MP, Member for Keira, Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast

Justin Clancy MP, Member for Albury and NSW Shadow Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

The Hon Dugald Saunders MP, Member for Dubbo, Shadow Minister for Regional NSW, Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Trade and Natural Resources, Leader of the Nationals

Dr Joe McGirr MP, Member for Wagga Wagga

Phil Donato MP, Member for Orange

The Hon Leslie Williams MP, Member for Port Macquarie, Shadow Minister for Women, Shadow Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, and Shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

The Hon Paul Toole MP, Member for Bathurst, Shadow Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism

The Hon Sam Faraway MLC

The Hon Wes Fang MLC, Shadow Assistant Minister for Police and Emergency Services

The Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC, Shadow Minister for Education and Early Learning, Shadow Minister for Western NSW

The Hon Stephen Lawrence MLC

Janelle Saffin MP, Member for Lismore, Deputy Government Whip, and Parliamentary Secretary for Disaster Recovery

The Hon Mark Banasiak MLC

The Hon Emma Hurst MLC

The Hon Peter Primrose MLC

Clayton Barr MP, Member for Cessnock

Liza Butler MP, Member for South Coast

Trish Doyle MP, Member for Blue Mountains

Tanya Thompson MP, Member for Myall Lakes

Federal

The Hon Jason Clare MP, Member for Blaxland, Minister for Education

Senator the Hon Anthony Chisholm, Assistant Minister for Education, Assistant Minister for Regional Development, Assistant Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

The Hon Kristy McBain MP, Member for Eden-Monaro and Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories

Senator Deborah O'Neill, Senator for New South Wales

Senator the Hon Sarah Henderson, Shadow Minister for Education, Senator for Victoria

Senator Perin Davey, Deputy Leader of the Nationals, Shadow Minister for Water, Shadow Minister for Emergency Services, Senator for NSW

The Hon Michael McCormack MP, Member for Riverina, Shadow Minister for International Trade and Development in the Pacific

The Hon Mark Coulton MP, Member for Parkes

Pat Conaghan MP, Member for Cowper, Shadow Assistant Minister for Social Services

Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie, Leader of the Nationals in the Senate, Shadow Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development. Senator for VIC

The Hon Darren Chester MP, Member for Gippsland, Shadow Minister for Regional Education, Shadow Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories

Dr Helen Haines MP, Member for Indi

The Hon Andrew Gee MP, Member for Calare

Senator David Pocock, Senator for the ACT

Senator Dave Sharma, Senator for NSW

Kylea Tink MP, Member for North Sydney



Submissions and inquiries

Charles Sturt makes submissions to reviews and inquiries on issues relating to higher education and regional communities.

For submissions to Parliamentary inquiries in particular, we often draw on the expertise of academic and other staff.

Over the past few years, there has been a steady increase in invitations to present evidence to Parliamentary inquiries, visits to campus by committees and citation of the university's submission and evidence in various reports. For example, our successful Collaborative Teacher's Aide Pathway program was one of only a handful of case studies in the Universities Accord final report.

We also work collaboratively with peak body groups such as Universities Australia and the Regional Universities Network to ensure that university issues and opportunities are being advocated for through these networks.

These issues included:

- National Student Ombudsman
- Student Support Policy Guidelines
- Review of Regional Migration Settings
- Review of the Foreign Arrangements Scheme
- Draft International Education and Skills Strategic Framework
- National Skills Taxonomy.

In 2024, we made submissions to the:

- House of Representatives Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Resources inquiry into Food and Beverage Manufacturing in Australia
- Joint Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs inquiry into economic self-determination and opportunities for First Nations Australians
- National Skills Passport
- Future Drought Fund Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs Review
- Early Childhood Education and Care Study conducted by Jobs and Skills Australia
- Development of an Early Years Strategy by the Department of Social Services
- Treasury on regional universities, regional services, and regional development.



Dr Robert O'Connor
Public Policy Specialist



The Select Committee for Remote, Rural and Regional Health visiting our Bloomfield campus in Orange

Our engagement with the NSW Government included submissions to or comments on:

- a refresh of the NSW Higher Education Strategy
- the NSW Legislative Assembly Select Committee on Remote, Rural and Regional Health's inquiry into health services and specialist care
- the NSW Government's Innovation Blueprint (pictured above).

On key issues like the Accord and international education, we also met with and wrote to Ministers, MPs, Senators and their staff to advocate for regional universities and communities.



Mr Carlo Iacono, Dr Immaculate Motsi-Omoijiade and Prof Janelle Wheat.

Hearings and inquiry visits

The Select Committee for Remote, Rural and Regional Health visited our teaching facilities at Orange's Bloomfield campus in May. Following the tour, the committee held a public hearing in Orange with representatives from the university giving evidence at the hearing.

In follow-up to submissions made in 2023, Professor Janelle Wheat, Carlo Iacono and Dr Immaculate Motsi-Omoijiade (pictured) from Charles Sturt gave evidence to a hearing of the Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training inquiry into the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in the Australian education system. The university's submission and evidence was cited several times in the inquiry report and Study Buddy or Influencer. This shows that our representations to these kinds of inquiries are being read and considered.



Veterinary workforce inquiry

There is a critical shortage of veterinarians in New South Wales and regional Australia.

The critical shortage of veterinarians is an ongoing problem caused by recruitment and retention challenges, with many regional vets attracted to more lucrative and family-friendly jobs in the city. The demands of the job and the added pressure on those who stay in regional areas lead to burnout and mental health issues. Unfortunately, the shortage of vets has significant impacts on the agricultural sector and regional communities.

In recognition of the importance of this issue, the NSW Legislative Council launched an inquiry in June 2023 into veterinary workforce shortages in the state. As one of only two universities in NSW with a veterinary school, Charles Sturt has always been very active in advocating for policies that improve conditions for the current workforce and build a sustainable future workforce.

In a submission to the Legislative Council inquiry and in evidence to a public hearing, we offered several recommendations, such as resolving training and accreditation issues impacting the future veterinary workforce. In response to discussions at the public

hearing, we also sent the committee a follow-up letter highlighting the need for reform to improve recognition of the veterinary technologist qualification, a step that would enable graduates to play a more significant role in alleviating the workforce shortage. The university's submission and follow-up letter were both cited in the final report for the inquiry, with Charles Sturt's degrees included as a case study.

In April this year, we also hosted a public hearing of the inquiry. Before the hearing, committee members toured our veterinary teaching facilities and met some of the wonderful students enrolled in our Bachelor of Veterinary Science and Bachelor of Veterinary Technology degrees. The committee had a particularly engaging conversation with staff and students in our unique vet tech program, earning the thanks of the committee Chair in the final report.

We will continue to lobby the government to invest in the veterinary workforce and look forward to improved outcomes for the sector.





The Hon Wes Fang MLC with veterinarian students at the inquiry into veterinary workforce shortages in NSW

Key recommendations to the inquiry

There is a strong need to:

- review the financial supports for students, practitioners and universities in the provision of veterinary education
- consider scholarships and other means of funding support for students whilst completing their clinical placements
- increase recognition of the veterinary technician to move toward a more specialised practitioner role. A formal accreditation process is needed for veterinary nurses and veterinary technologists to help establish both roles as professions and help meet critical workforce needs.



Veterinary technician students



The Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC talking with veterinary students



International education

Changes to the regulatory and legal arrangements around international education.

This year, the government has made substantial changes to the regulatory and legal arrangements around international education, often with little notice or consultation. The major change was a decision to cap commencements from 2025. We have been working with Universities Australia, the Regional Universities Network and the NSW Vice-Chancellors' Committee to make sure the new arrangements recognise the needs and circumstances of regional universities, like Charles Sturt. Our international student cohorts are critical in supporting the provision of other activities such as student support services and impactful regional research.

The university's initial submission to the Senate inquiry on the Education Services for Overseas Students Amendment (Quality and Integrity) Bill 2024 resulted in an invitation for the Vice-Chancellor to give evidence at a public hearing. We lodged a follow-up submission after the announcement of an indicative cap for our institution and wrote to the Education Minister, the Hon Jason Clare MP, about our concerns. While the Senate inquiry noted the many concerns expressed by universities and industry peak bodies, it recommended only minor changes to the Bill – none of which will mitigate the damage the caps are likely to cause.

The introduction of international nursing at our Dubbo campus was mentioned at the Senate inquiry by the CEO of the Regional Universities Network, Mr Alec Webb, as a prime example of how successful international education programs can have an immediate positive effect on regional workforce capacity.



International Nursing Launch The Hon Dugald Saunders MP, student Emma Solomon, The Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC, Mr Justin Clancy MP and lecturer Maryanne Podham

“The international students have been a wonderful asset to Dubbo campus life, contributing to the vibrancy, inclusivity and diversity of our campus community. I’ve been privileged to witness new friendships form and the building of collaborative relationships that I look forward to seeing grow over their time here and into their futures as registered nurses.”

Nikki Baggott, International Support Officer, Dubbo Campus

Charles Sturt international students filling the gaps for regional workforces.

This year marked the first intake of international students for our new on-campus Bachelor of Nursing degree at the Dubbo campus. Approved by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC), the program allows for 17 international student positions in 2024, with an additional intake of 17 students each year thereafter.

The initial success and uptake have been outstanding with the course fully subscribed in 2024. By February this year, 17 international students joined our first-year domestic students on campus to begin study. Orientation incorporated many welcome activities, recognising the broader cultural backgrounds of our new student cohort.

With ANMAC accreditation, the students have the opportunity to complete work-integrated learning in the Dubbo area during their degree. It is hoped that this will foster the students’ love of the Dubbo region, leading to students staying local after graduation and creating positive outcomes for our community.

To demonstrate the region’s capacity to accommodate all the needs of an international student in a regional Australian location and to

facilitate a successful student introduction to Dubbo, the university continues to work closely with a range of stakeholders. This includes Dubbo Regional Council, Regional Development Australia, Orana Residents of Indian Sub Continental Heritage (ORISCON) and key international community organisations. The overall outcome is introducing the students to the community and directly supporting the regional skills shortages.

The immediate success and growing interest in this program reflects the strength of collaboration between the university and the regional community, with a warm welcome extended by the people of Dubbo.

Highlights

- The program boasts an 88 per cent student retention rate due to its continued student support and engagement.
- Our international nursing students at the Dubbo campus come from Nepal, India and Bangladesh.



National Press Club, Canberra

Addressing the critical challenges facing national biosecurity at the event, Biosecurity: Safeguarding Our Nation.

Over 130 stakeholders convened on The National Press Club in Canberra for Charles Sturt University and Gubali Institute's focus on biosecurity.

The event reaffirmed the university's commitment to leading the conversation on biosecurity and supporting active solutions that will benefit Australia's future. It provided a valuable opportunity to bring together Commonwealth and State agencies, industry partners, research organisations, and producers, with an aim to foster collaboration and inspire innovative solutions to enhance the biosecurity of Australia.

A highlight of the event was the launch of the Charles Sturt University Biosecurity Hub – a major initiative representing a co-investment of nearly \$30 million dedicated to bolstering the nation's biosecurity defences. The hub aims to protect Australia's food, farms, and communities by bringing together a multidisciplinary team of expert researchers and trainers from various disciplines, including microbiology, ecology, veterinary and animal science, environmental science, artificial intelligence, cyber futures, extended reality, and biosecurity training.

A dynamic panel discussion was also a main feature of the event with experts from various fields, including:

Justine Saunders APM – Deputy Secretary, Biosecurity, Operation and Compliance, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)

Dr Sam Hamilton – Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer, DAFF

Dr Scott Ison – Program Lead for Animal Biosecurity and Welfare, Local Land Services (Deniliquin)

David Mackay – Academic Director, Biosecurity Training Centre, Charles Sturt University

The panel focused on promoting a unified approach towards biosecurity, emphasising the need for collaborative efforts between communities and organisations.

By showcasing innovative research and solutions from Charles Sturt to key decision makers in Canberra, the event facilitated critical insights and collaborations that have the potential to directly shape national biosecurity policies and strategies for the future.



Prof Renée Leon PSM opening address



Prof Jade Forwood, David Mackay, Prof Mark Evans, Justine Saunders APM, Prof Renée Leon PSM, Dr Sam Hamilton, Dr Scott Ison, Justin Clancy MP, Prof Lee Baumgartner



Ms. Justine Saunders
APM, Deputy Secretary,
Biosecurity, Operations &
Compliance Group, DAFF



Panel discussion



Samantha Beresford, James McKecknie, and Brad Cam, General-Manager of Regional Development Australia at the Dubbo RCC



Josh Gordon, Director of RDA Central West, Wendy Mason, CEO Country Education Foundation and Julia Andrews at the Orange RCC dinner



Annette Steele, CEO Orange Local Aboriginal Land Council and The Hon Andrew Gee MP, Federal Member for Clare at the Orange RCC dinner



Prof John McDonald, Executive Dean Faculty of Arts and Education, Adam Drummond, Chair Committee4Wagga and Tony Heywood, Charles Sturt University Secretary at the Wagga Wagga RCC event



Annette Steele, CEO Orange Local Aboriginal Land Council and The Hon Andrew Gee MP, Federal Member for Clare at the Orange RCC dinner



Members of the Albury RCC engaging in discussion

Regional Consultative Committees

In 2024, we refreshed the membership of our Regional Consultative Committees (RCCs) and are pleased to continue ensuring their great success for many years to come.

The RCCs are a fundamental component established in accordance with the University Act, intended to provide strategic advice and insights to the university on issues of regional importance. Each committee's aim is to ensure a genuine connection between the university and the surrounding community.

Our six main campuses each host their own consultative committee, recognising the unique opportunities and challenges presented by their respective locales. It is essential for us to engage in collaborative activities that foster partnerships between the university and local communities, ultimately contributing to regional growth and development.

Charles Sturt University plays a crucial role in the communities we operate in, as research consistently indicates a strong link between the presence of a university and socio-economic progress. The university serves as a catalyst for social, technological and economic innovation.

However, we understand that achieving success requires more than the efforts of the university alone. Collaborations with local businesses, industry and government are vital

in addressing common goals and challenges. By pooling resources and leveraging collective expertise, we can create a dynamic environment for the exchange of knowledge, skills and resources.

Our diverse array of RCC members includes more than 90 industry and community leaders from across our footprint. They represent perspectives from local, state and federal governments and agencies, businesses of all sizes, the finance sector, educational institutions, First Nations leaders and community organisations.

Industry expertise and insights are essential for fostering economic prosperity and social wellbeing within our region. Through education, skills development and employment pathways, we can create meaningful opportunities and improve outcomes for individuals.

The RCC members provide first-hand feedback and advice on a region-by-region basis. A highlight of this interaction is where the members meet annually with the university's executive leadership team and other key senior staff. In 2024, 11 of these events were held across our footprint.



“Being part of the Charles Sturt University Regional Consultative Committee is incredibly valuable for Regional Development Australia – Central West. This committee is vital in fostering collaboration between the university and key stakeholders. Successful regional development is the result of education and innovation being at the forefront of community, business and government collaboration. The Regional Consultative Committee ensures that our region has input that benefits students, industry and the broader community.”

Josh Gordon, Director RDA Central West

“The Regional Consultative Committee has provided us with a wonderful opportunity to work more collaboratively and to build a deeper partnership with Charles Sturt University on the key issues facing our region.”

Vicki Seccombe, Business NSW Regional Director Western NSW



RCC and University Council members engaging in Port Macquarie



6 committees across our vast footprint

90 RCC members representing government, industry, business and education



11 formal engagement activities

34 Charles Sturt engagement events attended by members



Priorities for the Regional Consultative Committees:

- Strengthen industry and community engagement within each campus' regional footprint.
- Capitalise on specific regional opportunities for Charles Sturt University.
- Collaborate with industry to identify future workforce demands and address regional skill shortages.
- Support campus master planning initiatives.
- Advocate for key issues in the education sector, including international student caps.

Wagga Wagga Regional Consultative Committee Members

Aunty Cheryl Penrith OAM, Wiradjuri Elder

The Hon Michael McCormack MP, Member for Riverina,
Parliament of Australia

Dr Joe McGirr MP, Member for Wagga Wagga,
Parliament of NSW

Cr Dallas Tout, Mayor,
Wagga Wagga City Council

Ms Janice Summerhayes, Director Community Services,
Wagga Wagga City Council

Ms Dianna Somerville, Chair,
Regional Development Australia - Riverina

Ms Jill Ludford, Chief Executive,
Murrumbidgee Local Health District

Col Timothy Stone, Commanding Officer /
Commandant,
1st Recruit Training Battalion - Kapooka

Mr Graeme Kruger, Executive Director,
Rice Growers Association

Ms Serena Hardwick, Regional Director,
Business NSW Riverina Murray

Mr Peter Thompson, General Manager,
Wagga Wagga City Council

Mr James Bolton, Deputy Secretary,
Regional Development and Delivery,
Department of Primary Industries and
Regional Development

Mr Adam Drummond, Chair,
Committee 4 Wagga



Albury Regional Consultative Committee Members

Ms Tracey Squire, Deputy CEO Business,
Growth and Community,
AlburyCity

Mr Jonathan Davis, Head of Customer
and Stakeholder Relations,
TAFE NSW

Cr Ron Mildren, Mayor,
City of Wodonga

Dr Adrian Johnson, Principal,
Trinity Anglican College

Hon Sussan Ley MP, Member for Farrer and Deputy
Leader of the Opposition,
Parliament of Australia

Mr Justin Clancy MP, Member for Albury and Shadow
Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education,
Parliament of NSW

Cr Kylie King, Mayor,
AlburyCity

Ms Justine Summers, Chief Operating Officer,
Marathon Health

Mr Glen Robinson, General Manager,
Albury Business Connect

Ms Carlie Porteous, General Manager,
Murray Region Forestry Hub (MRFH)

Mr Bill Appleby, CEO,
Albury Wodonga Health

Ms Edwina Hayes, CEO,
Regional Development Australia – Murray



Bathurst Regional Consultative Committee Members

Mr David Sherley, General Manager,
Bathurst Regional Council

Dr Tracey Callinan OAM, CEO,
Regional Arts NSW

The Hon Paul Toole MP, Shadow Minister for Police,
Member for Bathurst, Parliament of NSW

Ms Julie Fairley, Client Innovation
Centre Lead, IBM

Cr Jess Jennings, Mayor,
Bathurst Regional Council

Mr Paul Jones, President,
Bathurst Business Chamber

Ms Narelle Stocks, CEO,
Skillset

Mr Nicholas Packham, CEO,
Vivability

Cr Margaret Hogan, Councillor,
Bathurst Regional Council

Ms Maryanne Keith, Business Owner,
Wilga Station

Ms Jenny Bennett, Executive Officer,
Central NSW Joint Organisation



Orange Regional Consultative Committee Members

Mr Phil Donato MP, Member for Orange,
Parliament of NSW

The Hon Andrew Gee MP, Member for Calare,
Parliament of Australia

Ms Annette Steele, CEO,
Orange Local Aboriginal Lands Council

Mr David Waddell, CEO,
Orange City Council

Cr Gerald Power, Deputy Mayor,
Orange City Council

Ms Amy Van de Ven, Secretary,
Business Orange

Ms Alice Munro, Director of Research,
Western NSW LHD

Mr Jeff Whitton, Councillor,
Orange City Council

Ms Vicki Seccombe, Regional Director,
Business NSW – Western Region

Ms Wendy Mason, CEO,
Country Education Foundation

Mr Josh Gordon, Director,
Regional Development Australia – Central West

Mr Ricky Puata, Deputy Director, Regional Economic
Development,
Department of Primary Industries and Regional
Development

Mr Jason Hamling, Mayor,
Orange City Council

Ms Maryanne Hawthorne, Executive Director Strategic
Reform, Planning and Partnerships,
Western NSW LHD



Port Macquarie Regional Consultative Committee Members

The Hon Leslie Williams MP, Member for Port Macquarie, Shadow Minister for Women, Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, and Shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Parliament of NSW

Mr Pat Conaghan MP, Member for Cowper, Shadow Assistant Minister for Social Services, Shadow Assistant Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, Shadow Assistant Minister for Social Services,
Parliament of Australia

Uncle Bill O'Brien OAM, Biripai Elder

Dr Clare Allen, Chief Executive Officer,
Port Macquarie Hastings Council

Mr Stewart Dowrick, Chief Executive,
Mid North Coast Local Health District

Mr Craig Milburn, General Manager,
Kempsey Shire Council

Ms Sarah McCullough, Chief Digital Officer,
Essential Energy

Mr Scott Marchant, Director,
King and Campbell

Dr Madeleine Lawler, Chief Executive Officer,
Regional Development Australia – Mid North Coast

Mr Allan Guihot, Principal,
St Columba Anglican School

Ms Skye Petho, President,
Hasting's Business Women's Network

Mrs Alex Glen-Holmes, President,
Business Port Macquarie

Ms Moira Finch, CEO,
Ramsay Health Care – Port Macquarie Private Hospital

Ms Meg Teasdell, Manager Business Development,
Birdon Group

Mr Kellon Beard, Regional Director,
Business NSW – Mid North Coast

Mr Ashkay Panchal, President,
Mid North Coast Indian Association

Cr Peta Pinson, Mayor,
Port Macquarie Hastings Council



Dubbo Regional Consultative Committee Members

Cr Matthew Dickerson, Mayor,
Dubbo Regional Council

The Hon Dugald Saunders MP, Shadow Minister for
Regional NSW, and Shadow Minister for Agriculture
and Natural Resources Member for Dubbo,
Parliament of NSW

Cr Craig Davies, Mayor,
Narromine Shire Council

Ms Anne Jones OAM, President,
Lions Australia,
Lion Clubs International

Ms Alison Mitchell, Principal,
Macquarie Anglican Grammar School

Mr Steve Hinks, Director,
Taronga Western Plains Zoo

Cr Phyllis Miller, Mayor,
Forbes Shire Council

The Hon Mark Coulton MP, Member for Parkes,
Parliament of Australia

Ms Megan Callinan, CEO,
Marathon Health

Mr Jay Forrester, Health Services Manager,
Wellington Aboriginal Corporation

Mr Murray Wood, CEO,
Dubbo Regional Council

Ms Justine Campbell, CEO,
Regional Development Australia – Orana

Mr Brad Cam, Chair,
Regional Development Australia – Orana

Ms Josie Howard, Director Key Workforce Attraction,
Department of Primary Industries and Regional
Development

Mr Mark Spittal, CEO,
Western NSW LHD



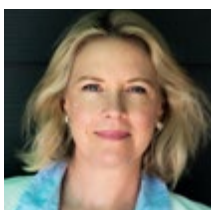
Orange

It may be one of the smaller campuses, however Orange certainly excels at community and industry engagement.

We have two 'campuses' in Orange. The thriving original campus - still often referred to as the Ag College by locals - which is home to our Schools of Rural Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy and Physiotherapy, and provides student accommodation.

On the other side of town, Charles Sturt also has a strong presence in the new Bloomfield Private Hospital where our School of Rural Medicine has a clinical school for student placements. Bloomfield is also the location of our new simulation lab with the latest simulation equipment for medical training. It provides an excellent conference space which we use for numerous industry events throughout the year. This year, for example, we hosted the Water Security Policy Lab with local and state government (see page 33 for more information on the Policy Lab).

Another major event delivered at our Orange campus in 2024 was the annual Sky Stories Community Observation Night. This year, it attracted over 250 people who set up their picnic blankets under the stars to view the solar system through telescopes provided by the Central West Astronomical Society. Sky Stories incorporates traditional First Nations astronomical storytelling, food and dance, and is a wonderful way for our students, staff and the local community to connect with local Wiradjuri culture and the university.



Julia Andrews
Director of External Engagement
(Bathurst and Orange)



Bhaan Dance Group performing at the Sky Stories event on Orange campus



The Hon Darren Chester MP and Sam Farraway MLC, visiting the Orange campus and talking to medical students



Highlights

- Leading 18 events and initiatives.
- Hosting NSW Premier, the Hon Chris Minns, to the Orange campus.
- Supporting the local LGBTQIA+ community and the Orange Rainbow Festival.
- Hosting the region's high school principals at our annual Principals' Dinner.
- Establishing the new Regional Consultative Committee with key leaders from across the region.
- Facilitating TAFE nursing student visits to learn from our world-class anatomy lab.
- The wonderful dedication to the Orange campus by Susan Barnes, whose professionalism and kindness will be greatly missed from the team!

Open Day on the Orange campus





Participants from local councils and government agencies across Central NSW attended the Policy Lab in Orange

“We need this kind of network to come together and flesh out the issues.”

Former Mayor of Bathurst Regional Council, Dr Jess Jennings



Local Government Policy Labs

The latest Local Government Policy Lab resulted in key insights and actions to improve water management for regional communities.

Local Government Policy Labs have been developed in collaboration with the Central NSW Joint Organisation of Councils to explore the big issues important to our communities. They also inform actions the region can work on to 'shift the dial' and make a real difference.

This year, the Policy Lab was held at our Bloomfield campus in Orange. The two-day event brought together academics, industry, government, water industry professionals and community representatives to explore the role of localism in water management in Central NSW.

Drawing on local, national and international water management research and experience, the aim was to inform and make recommendations on policy and its implementation for improved water management for regional communities.

Policy Labs are an excellent example of the university engaging with communities, industry and all levels of government to tackle the big issues such as water security in a changing climate.

Actions from the Policy Lab include ongoing collaboration between the university and the Joint Organisation to advance regional planning for climate change adaptation, and to develop a 50-year bipartisan plan for the Lachlan Valley, leveraging the river as a terminal system.

Julia Andrews, Prof Lee Baumgartner, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Prof Mark Evans, Executive Director of CNSWJO Jenny Bennett, Meredith McPherson from the Central NSW Joint Organisation





Highlights

- We led 51 events and initiatives throughout the year at the Bathurst campus.
- We hosted numerous VIPs to the campus, including State and Federal Ministers and the Governor of NSW, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC.
- We sponsored, skated, spice-wined and shivered our way through Winterfest which saw over 28,000 people past our bright orange Charles Sturt University tent.
- We supported our School of Information and Communication Studies to launch its fabulous new Communication Precinct, complete with new podcast studios, newsroom, editing suites and TV studio.
- We worked closely with colleagues to manage the critical community stakeholder engagement for the Bathurst Campus Master Plan.
- We hosted the RDA Central West Year 11 mentor students on a tour of the Bathurst campus.



Johan van Vloten and the Hon. Mr Michael Kirby, AC, CMG on the Bathurst campus for a public lecture presented by Mr Kirby

Julia Andrews, Susan Barnes and Jaclyn Underwood



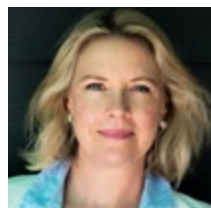
Bathurst

At the beginning of the year, we welcomed our new Community Relations Officer, Jaclyn (Jac) Underwood to the Bathurst team. Jac is well-established and connected within the Bathurst community and a star Charles Sturt communication graduate. Having Jac on the ground in Bathurst has meant we have significantly increased the number of events and activities delivered in 2024.

This year, we were proud to present two excellent public lectures at the Bathurst campus. First, a passionate talk by Professor Eileen Pittaway on her 35 years of working with refugee women and children around the world. Second, a memorable address by the great Michael Kirby AC CMG who held aloft his personal copy of the declaration of Human Rights which, we learned, he always carries in his top pocket.

These public lectures, and events such as the Queer Screen Film Festival and the Dhuluny Conference, enable us to truly connect the public to the staff, students and physical landscape and buildings of the Bathurst campus. They empower conversations, networking, connections and opportunities to flourish. They demonstrate the immeasurable value of a university to people and place.

Speaking of place, the Dhuluny events held in August were a somber truth-telling, marking 200 years since martial law and its horrific consequences was declared on the Wiradyuri people. It was our great privilege, in collaboration with the Charles Sturt University Centre for Law and Justice, to support the Bathurst Elders and Wiradyuri community to deliver this important national event at the Bathurst campus.



Julia Andrews

Director of External Engagement
(Bathurst and Orange)



Bathurst Winter Festival 2024



Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC,
Governor of NSW and Julia Andrews on the Bathurst campus

Bathurst Winter Festival

The 2024 Bathurst Winter Festival was a large-scale community engagement effort, with Charles Sturt University playing a pivotal role in the festival's success by sponsoring the Brew and Bite weekend.

Charles Sturt staff at the Bathurst Winter Festival

Bathurst Winter Festival student volunteers





The Charles Sturt University Brew and Bite at the Bathurst Winter Festival

Set amongst the backdrop of Bathurst's CBD, 27,000 people attended our Brew and Bite nights.

The university's presence was felt with an interactive stall hosted by student ambassadors who coordinated activities including Charlie the mascot meet and greets, Charlie social media content creation, and free popcorn and merch giveaways.

2MCE radio broadcasted from the event, interviewing the Vice Chancellor Professor Renée Leon PSM and other key stakeholders. Our branding was prominent throughout the festival with flags, banners and scrim set up, allowing the university to have a strong visual presence in the CBD.

A corporate skate session exclusive to Charles Sturt staff, students, alumni, and this year to international students, was a standout success. 150 tickets for the event were snapped up in minutes, with overwhelmingly positive feedback from attendees who appreciated the opportunity to engage with their employer and education provider in a fun and social setting.

Prof Renée Leon PSM, The Hon Kristy McBain MP, David Bardos on the Wagga Wagga campus



Below: Prof Renée Leon PSM and Craig Mansour, College Principal The Riverina Anglican College, signing an MOU



Highlights

- Hosting Senator David Sharma and the Hon Kristy McBain MP, Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories.
- Collaborating with Business NSW Riverina-Murray in a community forum with Essential Energy.
- An evening with Australian political journalist Barrie Cassidy at the Riverina Playhouse.
- Hosting the 2024 Digital Agrifood Summit.
- Business breakfast in partnership with Committee 4 Wagga with special guest speakers, former Prime Minister the Hon Tony Abbott AC and Kay Hull AO.

Wagga Wagga



Leading Australian journalist Barrie Cassidy talking about the Fragility of Democracy



Local Principals hearing from Tyla Cavallaro currently studying a Bachelor of Education K-12



The Hon Tony Abbott AC and Kay Hull AO at the breakfast hosted by Charles Sturt University and Committee 4 Wagga

This year's re-establishment of the Riverina Regional Consultative Committee has been a significant achievement, aligning university strategies with regional needs. Through collaboration and continuous engagement, the committee tailors academic programs and research to address the economic, social and cultural priorities of the Riverina, enriching student experiences and driving sustainable growth.

The university has solidified its role as a global hub for education and innovation, as evidenced by our partnership with AgriPark in hosting Grain NSW. This event highlighted our Global Digital Farm and Gulbali Research Institute's leadership in agricultural research, earning international recognition.

Internationally, we expanded global engagement with the Philippine Consul General, Charmaine Rowena Aviquivil, and the Ambassador of Thailand, Arjaree Sriratanaban, opening new opportunities for collaboration and research.

Locally, two memoranda of understanding were signed – one with The Riverina Anglican College and the other with the Pro Patria Centre, deepening our commitment to the community and enhancing education pathways.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work of Taryn Knagge and Emma McMahon who work tirelessly to make all these events happen.



David Bardos
Director, External Engagement
(Albury-Wodonga and Wagga Wagga)

Paradigm Shifts



Paradigm Shifts

Riverina College of Advanced Education, 1972–1985

Neil Hall



Rup and Justin Hall, and Doug Hill at the 'Paradigm Shifts' book launch.

As part of our commitment to community engagement, Charles Sturt has proudly unveiled a series of publications that explore the rich educational history associated with our campuses.

Among these significant releases, we are particularly excited to highlight two volumes that focus on the Wagga Wagga and Albury-Wodonga campuses of the Riverina College of Advanced Education. These books not only illustrate the resilience of our institution but also highlight the everlasting spirit of our surrounding communities, reinforcing our role as an anchor educational institution in the Albury-Wodonga and Wagga Wagga regions.

To celebrate this milestone, we hosted a book launch event for *Paradigm Shifts – Riverina College of Advanced Education 1972 – 1985*. The book, written by Neil Hall, is a story that focuses on personnel, management, policies, courses and infrastructure, but mostly the remarkable achievements that were made by this fledgling institution.

Hosted at The Bidgee and Vine in Wagga Wagga, it was attended by history enthusiasts, alumni and the Riverina College of Advanced Education, Friends of Charles Sturt University and members of the community to honour a shared history. This gathering provided a unique opportunity for attendees to connect with the past and engage with the individuals and events that have significantly shaped our university.

To view a copy of the book
→ library.csu.edu.au/archives/publications



Pro Patria Centre



Prof Megan Smith and board member for Pro Patria Jacqui Van de Velde, signing the MOU on behalf of both organisation

After forming a strong relationship over the last 18 months, Charles Sturt and the Pro Patria Centre (PPC) have formalised a strategic partnership through a memorandum of understanding to enhance support for veterans, first responders and their families. This collaboration addresses critical recommendations from the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, with a strong focus on improving veterans' health and wellbeing.

This partnership will emphasise the development of tailored education programs for veterans and Australian Defence Force (ADF) members transitioning into higher education, conducting vital research on veteran health in regional areas, and promoting best practices in mental health support. These efforts will deepen the understanding of veteran experiences within the university and the wider Riverina community, fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for those who have served.

This partnership reflects our strong commitment to regional development and dedication to supporting veterans and their families. Bringing together two institutions with a shared vision will offer comprehensive and tailored support in education, mental health, career development and social integration for veterans in the Riverina community.

The partnership symbolises a shared dedication to creating a brighter future for those who have given so much in service to the nation and it will bring about positive change in the community.



Jason Frost
Veteran
President of Defence
Shed Wagga Wagga
Board Member of Pro
Patria Centre

Albury-Wodonga

We achieved significant milestones throughout the year at the Albury-Wodonga campus, showcasing our commitment to regional development, education and sustainability.

A highlight was hosting the Business NSW Riverina-Murray Regional Summit, featuring discussions on regional development, strengthening partnerships with industry leaders and promoting workforce development.

The reestablishment of the Albury-Wodonga Regional Consultative Committee emphasised our commitment to building a platform for knowledge exchange and resource collaboration, bringing together stakeholders to boost the region's economic growth and social wellbeing.

The Principals' Breakfast in August was an opportunity for local educational leaders to connect, share insights and tackle challenges. These discussions deepened our collaboration with local schools, ensuring responsiveness to the educational needs of our communities.

We reiterated our commitment to environmental conservation by hosting events such as the Australian Land Conservation Alliance and the NSW Threatened Species Forum.

We also welcomed Australian Water Polo champion and three-time Olympian Rowie Webster to the campus, which was made possible through the efforts of the Gulbali Research Institute.



David Bardos
Director, External Engagement
(Albury-Wodonga and
Wagga Wagga)



Students from James Fallon High School receiving a CUP grant



Prof John McDonald, Assoc Prof Narelle Patton, Dr Tracey Parnell and David Bardos at the Principal Breakfast event in Albury



David Bardos and Serena Hardwick of Business NSW at the Riverina Murray "The Future for Business" Summit held on the Albury campus



Senator Deborah O'Neill engaging with our Masters of Speech Therapy students



Highlights

- Albury campus visit by Senator Deborah O'Neill.
- Continuing to administer the Ruth Whyte Memorial Bequest and associated grants.
- Albury Economic Development Roundtable.
- The campus playing host to the 2024 Business NSW Riverina-Murray, The Future of Business Summit.
- Gaining valuable feedback from our local principals at the Principals' Engagement Breakfast.



James McKechnie
addressing the
Dubbo RCC dinner



Highlights

- Supporting our School of Nursing to re-introduce nursing intensives back to the Dubbo Campus.
- Hosting the Queer Screen Film Festival – Best of the Fest.
- Delivering the Social Work Industry Forum in March to look at the local industry workforce demands.
- Working closely with colleagues to host multiple events, including a nursing industry careers night at the campus, Dubbo Experience Day, social work workshop and the Deadly Pathways Festival.
- Holding monthly Dubbo campus staff meetings aimed at information sharing and collaboration on activities.
- Hosting the Dubbo campus Tree Planting Day in September with the sustainability team, with attendance from members of the community and our students.
- Hosting the Sports Hub Master Planning session, outlining the potential vision of the campus for a regional sporting precinct.



Brad Cam, General Manager, Mid-Western Regional Council and Megan Callinan, CEO, Marathon Health and Pro-Chancellor, Charles Sturt University



Dubbo graduation ceremony

Lecturer in Nursing, Cathy Maginnis with Jess Finn studying nursing on the Dubbo campus

2024 campus report

Dubbo

In March 2024, the first cohort of international nursing students began their journey to a nursing career at the campus. Overall, 17 students were enrolled with community support contributing to the immediate success of the new international nursing program. This will assist greatly in growing the pipeline of nursing graduates in the Dubbo region over the coming years.

The Collaborative Teacher's Aide Pathway program remains a key offering, with the Dubbo stakeholders actively participating in its ongoing success. Enrolment numbers have surpassed 900, demonstrating the program's expanding impact and its ability to meet the needs of a growing number of individuals seeking to enhance their career prospects in education.

We have also been extremely busy with community consultation in establishing a potential Regional Study Hub at the Dubbo campus. A multitude of stakeholders are supporting our application to the Federal Government's latest round of Regional University Study Hub funding. If successful, this project would greatly assist the region in a much broader scope of supported education offerings on the Dubbo campus with the added advantage of creating campus vibrancy.

A massive thank you to the Dubbo campus staff for contributing to all these activities and especially our Community Relations Officer, Kendell Lawson.

Prof Graham Brown, Murray Wood, the Hon Dugald Saunders MP, Sam Beresford



James McKechnie
Director of External Engagement
(Dubbo)

Port Macquarie

In 2024, the Port Macquarie campus delivered numerous strategically aligned projects, showcasing our commitment to advancing the economic, social and cultural capital of our region. The campus hosted various events, including community forums, environmental sustainability and education events, multifaith dialogues and youth summits.

Key partnerships were pivotal to the delivery of diverse projects and events, highlighted by the 20th Annual Gender and Education Association Conference in June. This globally significant forum attracted 121 global leaders in gender equity and education and showcased our commitment to diversity, inclusion and equity.

We continued to foster meaningful partnerships with industry and educational institutions. The renewal of a four-year memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Taree Universities Campus resulted in 11 nursing graduates being employed at Manning Base Hospital. A new three-year MoU with the Mid North Coast Local Health District (MNCLHD) further solidified our long-standing relationship, with a focus on research opportunities and placements for rural and regional students.

I'm grateful to the many valued individuals and organisations whose collaborative spirit have enabled us to positively impact in our region. I extend sincere thanks to Karen Faichney, who joined our engagement team in July and brought a wealth of experience, local connections and energy to elevate our engagement and impact.



Kate Wood-Foye
Director, External Engagement
(Port Macquarie)





International Gulan (Bat) Night hosted on the Port Macquarie campus



Mulifaith Christian Hindu Dialogue Event



Queer Screen Film Festival



Mid North Coast Workforce Australia Taskforce Youth Forum 2024 held on the Port Macquarie campus

Highlights

- Luminosity Youth Summit 2024 – Purpose and Possibility.
- The International Gender and Education Association Conference.
- Mid North Coast Regional Consultative Committee inauguration.
- Annual Regional Principals Dinner & Panel.
- Bicentennial Parliamentary Roadshow – Community Forum.
- Interfaith Dialogues Series 2024.
- Mid North Coast Workforce Australia Taskforce Youth Forum 2024.
- Queer Screen Festival | Best of the Fest Screening.
- International Gulan (Bat) Night in Guruk.
- STEM 2024 | Secondary Teachers Professional Learning Event.
- Reconstruct NSW – Mid North Coast Preparedness Recovery and Adaption Forum.
- The Magic of Christmas Night Market.



Luminosity Youth Summit

Charles Sturt returned as the Foundation Partner of the 12th annual Luminosity Youth Summit in Port Macquarie in July 2024. The event ignites creativity, excellence and entrepreneurship and fosters purpose and wellbeing for young people aged 15 to 25 years.

More than 500 future regional leaders from across the state participated in the dynamic two-day national forum of mainstage keynotes and hands-on masterclasses to uplift and encourage young people to explore ideas for success.

As a partner of the Summit since its inception in 2012, we are committed to developing and supporting events which assist young people across the country to create a world worth living in. More than 4,000 young people have been part of the Summit over the last 12 years, enabling access to leadership and development opportunities. This year's Summit featured global thought leaders including aerotactical engineers, entrepreneurs, elite athletes, paramedics, mental health professionals, regional youth leaders and Charles Sturt ambassadors, First Nations scientists, Antarctic explorers and the Youth Ambassador to the United Nations.

Charles Sturt was honoured to work alongside the Luminosity team of 20 dedicated volunteers and over 110 regional partner organisations to bring this impactful event to life. Summit presenting partner, Mid North Coast Local Health District (MNCLHD), joined forces with Foundation Partners Regional Australia Bank and Rydges Port Macquarie.

Key partners providing funding support include:

- Business NSW
- Telstra
- St Agnes Catholic Parish
- Port City Bowling Club
- Legacy
- Rotary Taree North
- Rotary Club of Sunrise Port Macquarie
- Rotary Club of Kempsey
- Kempsey Country Universities Centre
- TAFE NSW
- headspace
- Port Macquarie Hastings Council
- University of Newcastle
- Hastings Businesswomen's Network
- Business Port Macquarie
- Charles Sturt University



500 Future Youth Leaders with Kate Wood-Foye Summit Co Founder, Andrew Morello MC with speakers Renee Wootton and Matt Purcell

Impact and reach beyond the summit

In August 2024, Luminosity was invited to present as part of the SPERA National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Conference for 400 delegates as a case study in community/industry connection and student motivation. Subsequently, Luminosity has been invited to submit a paper to the International Journal of Rural Education as a case study in rural connection featuring its work with Charles Sturt University, MNCLHD and the 110 community and industry partners to inspire and elevate regional and rural students.



Kate Wood-Foye and Renee Wootton



Creating community

Luminosity is a flagship event for our coastal region and an exciting space for young leaders to look to the future and grow. This vibrant event is brought to life by a dedicated team and a strong regional community, who not only provide key financial funding, but also strategic support and encouragement. This ensures that the program is as diverse and dynamic as those seen in our capital cities.



The 20th Annual Gender and Education Conference 2024

Secured and delivered on our Port Macquarie campus – the first time in GEA history the conference has been held regionally.

Led by co-chairs, Associate Professor Cate Thomas and Director of External Engagement Kate Wood-Foye, the exceptional trans-institutional collaboration of 36 Charles Sturt professional and academic staff organised and delivered this globally significant forum. The dedicated team, spanning multiple faculties, divisions, and campuses, successfully secured a competitive bid for Charles Sturt to host GEA's first post-COVID in-person conference.

The conference featured over 120 in-person delegates from countries including China, South Africa, United Kingdom, Afghanistan and Sweden, along with 10 world-class keynote speakers. Offering 81 diverse presentations, pre-conference workshops for higher degree/early career researchers and facilitated crucial discussions on dismantling systemic gender barriers in education. The successful delivery and commitment to inclusivity showcased Charles Sturt's leadership in diversity and inclusion, fostering lasting partnerships and initiatives to drive ongoing positive change.

The conference not only boosted the economic, cultural and social wealth of the Port Macquarie Hastings region, it further underscored Charles Sturt's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusivity. Global delegates experienced our genuine approach and application of accessibility, intersectionality and global representation, which resulted in a world-class conference experience that positioned Charles Sturt as a leader in gender and education.



GEA executives and delegates from China, Taiwan and South Africa





Principals' events

Our principals' networking series provides a valuable platform for educational leaders in our communities to come together with members of our executive leadership team and senior leaders to share insights and address the current challenges and opportunities facing education.

These events ensure we remain connected to our local school communities, where we can discuss pressing issues, collaborate on solutions and gain valuable feedback and guidance, ultimately helping to navigate our future direction and impact.

“This is one of the very few cross-sectoral events where principals from independent, Catholic and public schools are all in attendance. The conversations are valuable. Thank you to Charles Sturt for hosting this event once again.”

“It was great to hear of Charles Sturt's involvement in the various teacher education initiatives underway.”

“It was a very informative evening and a great opportunity to network with others. Great to hear about the new courses on offer for next year.”



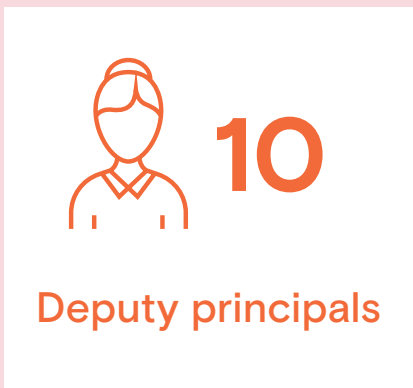
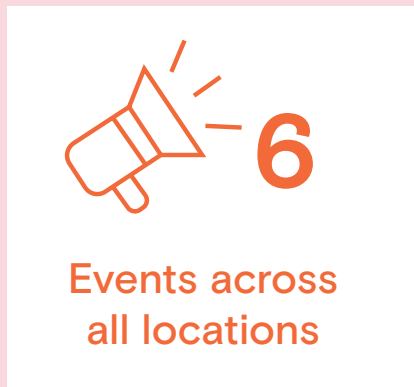
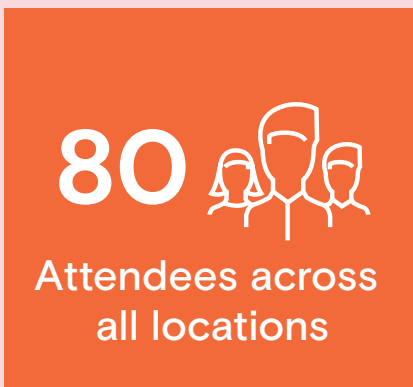
Principals' dinner at Orange



Principals' breakfast in Albury above. Principals' dinner in Dubbo



Principals' dinner in Port Macquarie





evokeAg networking night

Charles Sturt University and our AgriPark hosted a networking evening to announce new projects and initiatives.

Whilst attending the largest agricultural conference in Australia evokeAG, Charles Sturt University and our AgriPark hosted a networking evening to announce new significant projects, collaborations and partnerships in agriculture and renewable energy. With evokeAG attracting more than 1,800 innovators, corporations, researchers, investors, producers and government representatives from Australia and beyond, this provided a prime opportunity for Charles Sturt to engage with key industry leaders.

The networking evening drew more than 140 attendees, facilitating connections with key stakeholders and providing an opportunity to present an overview of AgriPark's investments, which focus on the following key areas:

Renewables in Agriculture Program: An initiative showcasing hydrogen applications and introducing new renewable technologies on demonstration farms.



Global Digital Farm (GDF) program extension: Building upon the success of the initial GDF program, this extension aims to incorporate cutting-edge technologies into operational farms.

Cool Soils Initiative expansion: This project will feature a carbon emissions counting calculator and develop strategies for carbon reduction.

Creation of an incubator: We are establishing a dedicated space where renewable energy and agricultural technologies can converge to drive sustainable solutions.

We were pleased to welcome representatives from prominent organisations including Sunrice Group, Wine Australia, Australian Wool Innovation, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Meat and Livestock Australia, Food Agility CRC and Dairy Australia.



Sam Beresford, Chris Komorek (Food Agility CRC), Michael and Edwina Beveridge (Blantyre Farms)



Sam Beresford thanking speakers and sponsors at the Welcome Reception



Digital Agrifood Summit 2024

A premier event for the agricultural sector.

Through the visionary leadership of Charles Sturt University and Food Agility CRC, the Digital Agrifood Summit has cemented its reputation as a flagship event for the agricultural industry. The Summit continues to thrive, drawing global attention and showcasing cutting-edge technologies in real-world applications.

The Summit, held in Wagga Wagga, provided a world-class platform for industry leaders, researchers and innovators to connect and collaborate on solving the sector's most pressing challenges. This year, over 400 delegates from around the globe – including participants from India, New Zealand, the Philippines, Canada, Morocco, Sri Lanka and Switzerland – came together to explore the future of agriculture.

Day one: on-farm Expo Day

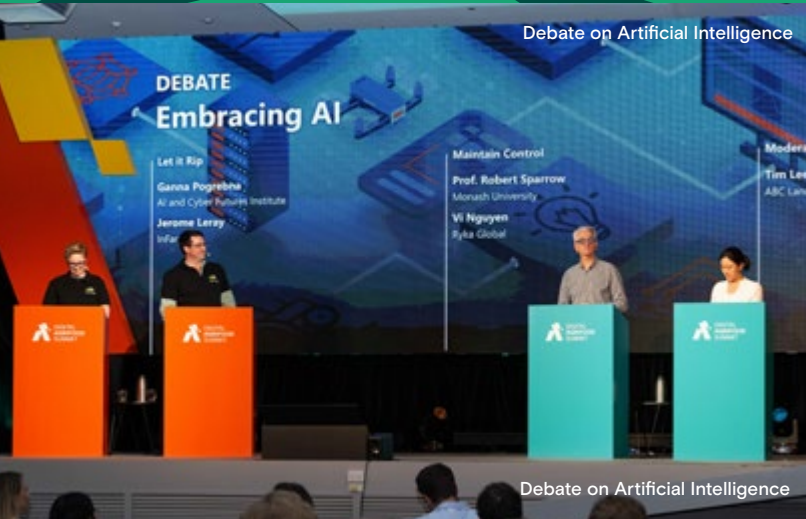
The Summit opened with an Expo Day, designed to engage producers and highlight practical applications of emerging technologies. Over 50 exhibitors

presented groundbreaking advancements in livestock and crop production, offering attendees insights into the transformative potential of data-driven tools and cutting-edge technologies.

Day two: industry insight and global perspectives

Day two brought delegates to Joyes Hall, where they heard from local and international speakers on critical topics such as decarbonising agriculture, enabling sustainability and debating the use of artificial intelligence.

A standout feature of this year's program was the immersive *Farm Office of the Future* presentation. Led by Professor David Lamb as 'Farmer Dave,' this engaging presentation simulated a farmer's daily routine, demonstrating how emerging technologies and data platforms can evolutionise farming practices and enhance efficiency.



Charles Sturt Deputy-Chancellor Dr Saranne Cooke with Peta Slack-Smith

“The program and speakers certainly outlined where the future of farming is going and provided insight on tools of how to get there.”

“The most entertaining session I have ever experienced in a conference!”

“Excellent theme. Program did deliver.”

Feedback from attendees

Gulbali Gala Dinner: a fitting finale

The Summit concluded with the popular Gulbali Gala Dinner, featuring keynote speaker Dr Tim Jarvis AM. An environmental scientist, author, filmmaker, adventurer and the 2024 South Australian of the Year, Tim shared his insights on the power of storytelling to advance sustainability and the urgent need to adopt sustainable practices across the sector.

The Digital Agrifood Summit is a testament to the strong partnership between Charles Sturt University and Food Agility CRC over the past four years. Thank you to Kris, Chips, Mick and Dave for your support, dedication and expert knowledge in making this event an ongoing success!



Expo Day held at Charles Sturt University's commercial farm

Community University Partnerships Grants



Supporting community development in our regions

The Community University Partnerships (CUP) Grants program is a modest grant initiative with a maximum project value of \$1,000. Its purpose is to bolster the growth of our regional areas by contributing to cultural, economic, sporting and environmental related activities. Additionally, it aims to cultivate higher education aspirations and awareness, especially among the youth in rural and regional communities.

Our CUP Grants program remains a crucial source of tangible, grassroots assistance to our local communities. We deeply appreciate the dedication of numerous individuals who devote their time and effort to not-for-profit organisations, schools and sports groups, all of which are fundamental to the communities where Charles Sturt operates.

2024 CUP Grants



160
Applications



Grant
categories

\$69,283
Distributed



7

Regional locations
and communities
supported



Projects
funded



CUP Grant stories



Orange United Sports Club

Orange United Sports Club recently acquired 34 brand-new basketball uniforms for their junior teams, paving the way for three new squads of talented young athletes to join the sport. By providing these uniforms, the club has effectively eliminated a financial barrier that often hinders participation from children and teens, ensuring that everyone has access to play. Each uniform proudly displays the Charles Sturt University logo on the back. This partnership not only promotes healthy, active lifestyles among local youth but also highlights Charles Sturt's dedication to nurturing the development of sports within our communities.



Willans Hill School

Chickens were the focus for the Willans Hill School CUP Grant. Located in Wagga Wagga, the school caters for 67 students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities. To create an engaging, sustainable and educational program, the educators aimed to establish a school chicken run that would enhance environmental awareness, instill a sense of responsibility and enrich the students' learning experiences, all while promoting positive well-being among staff and students. Since launching the school chicken run and acquiring 11 chickens, attendance has increased by up to 80 per cent for some students. These chickens have proven to be cherished members of the school community.



Zonta Club of Port Macquarie

The Zonta Club of Port Macquarie Inc, received a grant from Charles Sturt to purchase birthing kits, which were assembled by students from Melville High School in Kempsey. These birthing kits, designed to provide clean and safe delivery environments, help reduce infections and complications during childbirth, saving the lives of mothers and babies in under-resourced communities. The Club and Melville High School students are working together to make a real impact, supporting maternal health and advancing the mission to build a better world for women and girls.



Dubbo College Talented Athlete Program

The Talented Athlete Program (TAP) at Dubbo College aims to enhance the performance and future success of promising young athletes across various sports. Funding from the CUP Grant will help bridge the gap between the programs low-SES and rural students and their peers, by providing access to essential equipment needed for skill development and performance improvement, and the ability to attend competitive opportunities. The grant will also provide opportunities for scholarships, travel to sporting facilities and access to specialised training programs, empowering students to pursue their athletic dreams beyond high school.


Government Relations Enquiries
government@csu.edu.au

Julia Andrews
Director of External Engagement (Bathurst and Orange)
+61 438 245 755
juandrews@csu.edu.au

James McKechnie
Director of External Engagement (Dubbo)
+61 439 677 620
jamckechnie@csu.edu.au

Kate Wood-Foye
Director of External Engagement (Port Macquarie)
+61 438 208 581
kwoodfoye@csu.edu.au

David Bardos
Director of External Engagement
(Wagga Wagga and Albury-Wodonga)
+61 428 024 161
dbardos@csu.edu.au

 1800 275 278 (free call within Australia)
+61 1800 275 278 (callers outside Australia)

 [csu.edu.au](https://www.csu.edu.au)



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