Government Relations and External Engagement Annual Report 2023
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.

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Welcome

Welcome to a snapshot of 2023 from Government Relations and External Engagement

The year 2023 has been an exciting period for our portfolio, marked by the official amalgamation of the Government Relations and External Engagement functions. This combination has revealed natural synergies between the two and a shared commitment to achieving common objectives. The team has dedicated substantial effort to implementing the 2030 University Strategy while advancing our role as an anchor institution within our regional communities.

The Directors of External Engagement entered the year with a steadfast focus on advancing the interests of the regions and forging connections that build enduring and mutually beneficial partnerships. In a remarkable accomplishment, our team has successfully organised more than 1,000 engagement events across our expansive footprint. These engagements span a wide spectrum, including large conferences, industry forums, VIP visits, openings, expert discussions, community and cultural gatherings, and importantly, initiatives focused on engaging both students and staff.

In March 2023, we were pleased to welcome David Bardos to our team as the Director of External Engagement responsible for the Riverina and Murray region. David continues to add to his extensive knowledge of the region, and since starting has placed a strong emphasis on establishing connections and gaining a deep understanding of the university’s internal dynamics.

Our Community Relations Officers remain the cornerstone of our team, consistently rolling up their sleeves to organise first-class events and serving as indispensable support to our Directors of External Engagement.

Sam Beresford
Head of Government Relations and Regional Engagement

The year also saw the university sector undergoing a strategic review by the Federal Government as part of the Universities Accord process. The Accord has been a substantial and comprehensive effort, with our Public Policy Specialist, Dr Robert O’Connor, developing three extensive submissions that underscore the challenges of providing education in regional, rural, and remote areas. Excitingly, through effective advocacy and collaboration with our peers in the Regional University Network and Universities Australia, the government has shown a keen understanding of these challenges and the significance of regional education. There’s a clear commitment to bridging the educational gap and enhancing outcomes for our communities.

A special thank you must be given to Lisa Stout for her support to us all, and in particular, myself. Lisa is an example of what makes Charles Sturt great – in the outstanding people we have who are dedicated to their jobs and outcomes for the community. In 2024, Lisa will continue in the role as Government and Community Coordinator and be the glue that binds the team together.

There has not been a more exciting time to be in regional Australia. The Government Relations and External Engagement teams are all committed to the advancement of the regions and, importantly, ensuring that Charles Sturt continues to be an exemplary organisation for our regions that builds longstanding outcomes to ensure we enrich our already flourishing communities.

Thank you to my team, and we look forward to an exciting 2024 as we strive to embrace opportunities to engage with our external stakeholders and the communities that support us.
52% of total domestic

The year 2023 has been an exciting period for our portfolio, marked by the official amalgamation of the Government Relations and External Engagement functions. This combination has revealed natural synergies between the two and a shared commitment to achieving common objectives. The team has dedicated substantial effort to implementing the 2030 University Strategy while advancing our role as an anchor institution within regional communities.

Our Directors of External Engagement entered the year with a steadfast focus on advancing the interests of the regions and forging connections that build enduring and mutually beneficial partnerships. In a remarkable accomplishment, our team has successfully organised more than 150 engagement events at our campuses. These engagements span a wide spectrum, including large conferences, industry forums, VIP visits, openings, expert discussions, community and cultural gatherings, and importantly, initiatives focused on engaging both students and staff.

In March 2023, we were pleased to welcome David Bardos to our team as the Director of External Engagement responsible for the Riverina and Murray region. David has contributed his extensive knowledge of supply chains across this expansive region, with a strong emphasis on establishing connections and gaining a deep understanding of the university's internal dynamics.

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Thank you to the team and we look forward to delivering in 2024!

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.
Engagement and impact at a glance

1,066
Total engagements

735
Business/industry discussions

245
Tier one stakeholder discussions

62
Events

37
Staff events

27
MP and government visits

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

Our economic contributions to our regions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>GRP/GDP ($million)</th>
<th>Employment (FTE)</th>
<th>Household income ($million)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Region</td>
<td>$147</td>
<td>759</td>
<td>$106.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Region</td>
<td>$44.1</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>$49.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Region</td>
<td>$315.7</td>
<td>1,732</td>
<td>$254.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>$7.8</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>$6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>$469.9</td>
<td>2,264</td>
<td>$369.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KMPG Regional Economic Contributions, June 2023.

Legend
- Northern region
- Southern region
- Greater Sydney
- Central region
- Australian Capital Territory
- Main region campuses
- Specialist campuses
What our community say about us

**Forming connections**
96% 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**
98% of our community stakeholders would like to continue interacting with the university.

**Customer loyalty**
68% of our community would be extremely likely to recommend the university.

**Customer experiences**
95% of the community had a good to very good experience when interacting with the university.

**Customer satisfaction**
+62 Net Promoter Score (NPS).


Assessing community sentiment can be challenging and often complex. Therefore, we have enlisted the services of an independent expert to conduct a Community Pulse survey. This survey aims to provide us with invaluable insights into our performance, enabling us to make well-informed recommendations for our future direction and opportunities.

The outcomes of our most recent survey are presented on this page, underscoring our ongoing dedication to ensuring that we are meeting the needs and expectations of our community.

“Strong and regular communication. Charles Sturt is very supportive of ideas and future connections. They have also funded opportunities for our students.”

“I find the staff that represent Charles Sturt supportive and collaborative when it comes to community initiatives.”

“Communication from Charles Sturt is always relevant to either myself, my clients, my colleagues or network.”
In 2023, Government Relations experienced a year filled with significant activity. At the federal level, the sector underwent a comprehensive review by the Federal Government, a part of the Universities Accord process. Meanwhile, at the state government level, we experienced a change in government leadership. Our team worked diligently to establish enduring relationships and to ensure that all levels of government remain well-informed about the issues and advantages associated with regional education. This commitment to advocacy and relationship-building has been a key focus of our efforts in the past year.

We welcomed and held meetings with multiple Government representatives across our regional footprint including:

- Premier of NSW the Hon Chris Minns MP
- The Hon Tara Moriaty MLC, Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional NSW, and Minister for Western NSW
- Senator David Pecock, Senator for the ACT (Charles Sturt graduate)
- The Hon Emma McBride MP, Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, Assistant Minister Rural and Regional Health
- Senator Deborah O’Neill, Senator for NSW
- The Hon Susan Ley MP, Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Member for Farrer (Charles Sturt graduate)
- The Hon David Littleproud MP, Leader of the National Party, Shadow Minister for Agriculture
- Senator Perin Davey, Deputy Leader of the Nationals, Shadow Minister for Water and Emergency Management, Senator for NSW
- The Hon Michael McCormack MP, Shadow Minister for International Development and the Pacific, Member for Riverina
- The Hon Mark Coulton MP, Member for Parkes
- Pat Conaghan MP, Member for Cowper
- Dr Helen Haines MP, Member for Indi
- The Hon Andrew Gee MP, Member for Calare
- Senator Jonathon Duniam, Shadow Minister for the Environment, Senator for TAS
- Justin Clancy MP, NSW Shadow Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education, Member for Albury
- The Hon Tim Crackanthorp MP, Member for Newcastle (Charles Sturt graduate)
- Dr Joe McClure MP, Member for Wagga Wagga (Charles Sturt graduate)
- Phil Donato MP, Member for Orange
- The Hon Stephen Lawrence MLC, NSW Parliament
- Julia Finn MP, Member for Granville, Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier, and Parliamentary Secretary for the Arts
- The Hon Sam Farraway MLC, Shadow Minister for Regional Transport and Roads
- The Hon Paul Toole MP, Shadow Minister for Police, Member for Bathurst
- The Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC, Shadow Minister for Agriculture
- The Hon Dugald Saunders MP, Shadow Minister for Education and Western NSW, Member for Dubbo
- The Hon Wes Fang MLC, Shadow Assistant Minister for Police and Emergency Services
- The Hon Leslie Williams MP, Shadow Minister for Women, Shadow Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, and Shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Member for Port Macquarie
- Michael Kemp MP, Member for Oxley

Premier Chris Minns MP visiting the Wagga Wagga campus.

The Hon Emma McBride MP, Orange campus tour.

The Hon Wes Fang MLC; the Hon Michael McCormack MP; the Hon David Littleproud MP; and students from the Bachelor of Veterinary Biology / Bachelor of Veterinary Science on the Wagga Wagga campus.
Government Relations has been actively involved in submitting responses to various inquiries. Our primary objective has been to advocate for the educational requirements of our communities and provide the government with well-informed and valuable recommendations. On most issues we make our own submissions, sometimes supplemented by contributions to submissions from the Regional Universities Network (RUN), Universities Australia (UA) and other peak bodies.

Key submissions we’ve made in 2023

Federal consultations
- Revised National Science and Research Priorities. We made submissions on both a ‘conversation starter’ and the draft priorities, focusing on the need for science and research capabilities in regional areas.
- The development of a national Early Years Strategy.
- A response to a discussion paper released by the Teacher Education Expert Panel. Charles Sturt University’s submission was cited several times in the final report, Strong Beginnings.
- The university contributed to submissions from UA and RUN on the review of Australia’s migration system and some related inquiries.
- We made a stand-alone submission to the review of the Australian Research Council Act, raising several issues also covered in our submissions to the draft National Science and Research Priorities and the Australian Universities Accord. The university’s submission was quoted in the final report.

Federal Parliamentary inquiries
- The Senate Select Committee on provision of and access to dental services.
- The House Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training inquiry into the use of generative artificial intelligence in the Australian education system.
- The Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee inquiry on the Education Legislation Amendment (Startup Year and Other Measures) Bill 2023. The university also made a submission in 2022 on the design of this program. Our submission on the legislation was cited several times in the inquiry’s final report and in debate on the bill in Parliament.
- We contributed to UA and RUN submissions to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade inquiry into tourism and Australia’s international education sectors and hosted a public hearing of the inquiry on the Orange campus on 26 June.

NSW Government and Parliament
- NSW Legislative Council Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Regional NSW – inquiry into veterinary workforce shortages in NSW.
- The Legislative Assembly Select Committee on Remote, Rural and Regional Health is conducting inquiries into the implementation of recommendations made by an earlier inquiry (to which the university made a submission and gave evidence at a public hearing). We recently made a submission to the first of a series of inquiries, this one is on workforce issues, workplace culture and funding considerations for remote, rural and regional health.
The Accord

The Australian Universities Accord is the first whole-of-system review of the higher education sector in almost 15 years. Charles Sturt has been actively engaged with the Accord, with a submission in late 2022 on the Terms of Reference for the Accord Panel.

Since then, we have made submissions on:

- a discussion paper released in February 2023
- the interim report, published in July (this made several mentions of programs and initiatives at the university)
- the legislation to give effect to the ‘priority actions’ recommended in the interim report (via SUN and UA)
- a consultation paper on new requirements for universities’ policies on support for students
- the design of new suburban university study hubs.

In our submissions on the Accord we have proposed:

- a gradual increase in the number of Commonwealth supported places, with funding per place to rise to meet the cost of provision
- regional loading and other funding arrangements that support the higher costs of providing university education in regional areas (and across multiple campuses)
- funding certainty over time, through multi-year allocations, to allow universities to plan ahead
- reforming the funding arrangements (and particularly the higher student contributions) introduced under Job-ready Graduates, as these are adversely affecting many of the university’s students
- measurable targets, for every university as well as the whole system, to boost participation and attainment by hitherto underrepresented groups
- appropriate funding for student support services to meet the needs of a more diverse (and larger) student population
- more funding for enabling programs, to help get even more students on the pathway to tertiary education
- more direct funding support for students (such as scholarships and bursaries), especially those who must undertake compulsory long placements as part of their education
- targeted funding for research, research training and research infrastructure at regional universities in recognition of their role in regional innovation and economic development
- the development of a national research strategy that includes recognition of the need for science and research capability in regional areas
- greater collaboration between regional universities, as well as with their counterparts in metropolitan areas
- better system-wide coordination through a Tertiary Education Commission or similar body, which would also be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Accord and ensuring its goals are achieved.

Dr Robert O’Connor
Public Policy Specialist

Final report

The final report and recommendations from the Accord Panel will be provided to the Government by the end of 2023 and are likely to lead to rapid and significant reform. Shaping and responding to the implementation of the Accord will be a major focus of the Government Relations team in 2024.
A valuable partnership was formed this year between the university and the Central NSW Councils Joint Organisation, designed to help local councils and communities strengthen local democracy and address key policy challenges for local government into the future.

The Central NSW Joint Organisation (CNSWJO) is a local government network comprising 11 regional NSW councils. The CNSWJO covers more than 50,000 square kilometres of regional NSW and a population of more than 177,000 people.

The partnership is the first of its kind and serves as an example of how Charles Sturt can play a critical part in supporting our local communities and governments.

The inaugural Policy Lab was held at the Orange campus on 28 September and was attended by over 50 local leaders, mayors and general managers. Guided by Professor Mark Evans, the lab looked at the policy implications of the Democratic Audit of Australia’s assessment of the quality of regional local government and its contribution to Australian democracy.

It also took a deep dive into how social media can be used to foster responsible democratic dialogue and enable quality policy debate. Experienced government communications specialist, Les White, provided valuable insights and advice to attendees on how to manage social media in an environment that is increasingly hostile to elected representatives and local government employees.

The second Local Government Policy Lab will be held early in 2024 and will examine the critical issue of productive water and the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

“Charles Sturt has a social responsibility to use its expertise to support and enable collaborative problem-solving to address pressing issues facing regional Australia. We are very proud to partner with Central NSW Joint Organisation on this critical project.”

Prof Mark Evans, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, Charles Sturt University

“It is wonderful to have Charles Sturt University’s involvement in these workshops moving forward as an anchor institution for a large part of NSW, extending into Victoria.”

Jenny Bennett, Executive Officer, Central NSW Joint Organisation

Left: First Policy Lab discussion with CNSWJO Mayors and General Managers at Charles Sturt’s campus in Canberra.
Orange proved itself to be the small campus with the big heart when, on 15 November 2022, we opened the campus to 40 people who had been evacuated from Eugowra after a one-in-5000-year flash flood event completely destroyed the township and left residents homeless. With only a few hours’ notice, our wonderful staff and students rallied to organise accommodation and necessities for people who arrived wet, injured and traumatised. Over the next 10 days, we worked together with State agencies and community organisations to feed, clothe, and care for our Eugowra residents.

Throughout the year, the External Engagement team has worked with staff and external organisations and stakeholders on a diverse variety of events and engagements. From our beautiful Winhangarra welcome ceremony at the beginning of the year, to hosting events and campus tours with local high school students, international visitors, State and Federal Ministers and even the Governor of NSW. We have collaborated with community on business lunches, innovation networking event, and hosted staff social networking events to help create a friendly and collaborative work culture.

However, it was the flood event of November 2022 that illustrated just how critical our people and campuses are to our regional communities, and how seriously we take our social responsibility as a flagship institution in the region.

I’d like to thank all the Orange staff and students for making this a world worth living in, and the External Engagement team – Susan Barnes, Craig Murphy, Michelle Tarpenning and Karl Shead – for being completely indispensable!

Highlights

- Winhangarra welcome and celebration of a new year
- Sky Stories community observation event
- Local Government Policy Labs
- Ten4Ten High School Student Mentoring Program
- Vice Regal Reception to celebrate NSW Education Week with Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beasley
- Multiple state and federal Ministerial visits to campus
- Australian National Field Day
2023 in Bathurst started with a formidable challenge – transform the campus into a world-class Athletes’ Village to accommodate over 500 athletes from around the world for the World Athletics Cross Country Championships. Adding to the challenge, we needed to turn the campus around, ready to welcome our new and returning students within 24 hours of the championships ending.

Of course, our amazing staff teams across Facilities, Accommodation, Food and Beverage, IT, Security, Communications and Media, and External Engagement worked incredibly hard and got it done. Furthermore, our students gained valuable experience volunteering in first aid, marketing and communications capacities during the event.

This major international event, which injected around $2.6 million into the regional community, would not have been able to proceed without the university’s support.

We also hosted many dignitaries and events on and off campus throughout the year, working hard to ensure we nurtured and built connections with community, industry and government. In another highlight, the Bathurst Careers Expo moved from the town centre into our gym, bringing thousands of local high school students onto the campus.

In July, the university was the major sponsor of the Bathurst Winter Festival Brew and Bite. 90,000 people attended the event this year, and Charles Sturt was the second most recognised brand at the festival (after McDonalds!). Winter Festival is one of the most anticipated events in the Bathurst calendar, and it was wonderful to have a significant presence at such a joyful event and to remind locals and visitors that Bathurst is most certainly a university town!

2023 campus report

Bathurst

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Highlights

• World Athletics Cross Country Championships
• Winterfest Sponsorship
• Queer Screen Festival
• Bathurst Careers Expo
• Listening to Voices performance supporting mental health advocacy

Tom Burton, Julia Andrews, Julia Fairley (IBM), Prof Jason Smith, Steve Davies (IBM) and Prof Graham Brown.

Right: Over 500 athletes from around the world stayed at our Bathurst campus in February for the 2023 World Cross Country Athletics Championships.
As we reflect upon the past year, it’s impossible not to be overwhelmed with gratitude for the remarkable journey we’ve experienced together. My time at Charles Sturt has been fantastic, filled with invaluable experiences and significant achievements.

One of the highlights of this year was the opportunity to connect and collaborate with our dedicated university colleagues. Our interactions and partnerships have created a vibrant atmosphere where innovative ideas and perspectives have thrived, enriching our academic environment.

Furthermore, we are proud of our deep engagement with the community. Facilitating the Community University Partnerships Grant Program was outstanding, seeing first-hand how the program empowers and enriches community organisations. Our efforts have extended beyond the campus borders, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose.

Being part of the conversations surrounding the First Nations Strategy has been a profound honour. This ongoing dialogue has allowed us to contribute to a vital cause and showcase our commitment to inclusivity, diversity, and respect.

Our mission to provide value and impact to students, industry partners, and the wider community remains at our core. The positive change and knowledge we’ve imparted testify to our commitment and dedication to regional communities. The university’s commitment to stakeholder engagement is evident through its involvement in multiple strategic projects to enhance the region’s economic and cultural landscape.

Last, I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the incredible team that made it all happen – Joanna, Taryn, Lisa, Emma, and Sam. Your dedication, passion, and hard work are the driving force behind our success.

David Bardos
Director, External Engagement
(Albury-Wodonga and Wagga Wagga)
I wanted to reflect on the fantastic journey we’ve had at our remarkable campus. It has been an exceptional year in many ways, and we have much to be proud of.

One of the standout achievements of our campus is our commitment to sustainability. The Albury-Wodonga campus proudly cemented its place as one of Australia’s most sustainable university campuses. Our efforts to reduce our environmental impact and promote eco-friendly practices inspire and set an example for others.

Another noteworthy highlight has been our engagement with the community. Hosting the Thurgoona Wirlinga Precinct forum was a significant milestone, as it demonstrated our pivotal role in advancing regional development. The forum allowed us to contribute to the precinct’s structural planning, paving the way for a brighter future.

Our strong partnerships with local institutions and businesses, like the recent Memorandum of Understanding with Trinity Anglican College, reinforce our commitment to excellence in education and community engagement. These collaborations testify to our mission to foster innovation and provide growth opportunities.

We’ve enjoyed welcoming university partners and special guests throughout the year and organising various events. These interactions have enriched our academic and cultural landscape, making our campus a hub of learning and discovery. The combined efforts of our dedicated staff, students, and the broader community have made this year genuinely fantastic.

As we progress, let’s continue building on our successes and make our campus an even more remarkable place for learning, innovation, and sustainable development.

**2023 campus report**

**Albury-Wodonga**

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**Highlights**

- Hosting Thurgoona Wirlinga Precinct Forum with Albury City Council
- Charles Sturt and Trinity Anglican College MoU signing
- NSW Smart Sensing Network event
- Charles Sturt University Council visit and tour of campus
- Charles Sturt Albury-Wodonga campus strategic planning workshop
- Multiple state and federal government visit to campus
- David Bardos beating Justin Clancy MP in a rowing competition at the 2023 Open Day
The 2023 year at Dubbo campus was highlighted by the launch of the Bachelor of International Nursing, scheduled to commence in 2024. In August, we hosted key industry and government stakeholders for the official announcement. The introduction of international students into this program is anticipated to bolster enrolment numbers in our current Dubbo nursing degree. This initiative is geared towards addressing workforce shortages that are presently affecting Western NSW.

The campus hosted the Dubbo Social Work Industry Workshop and follow up industry meeting, the latter held in September. We also addressed the Alliance of Western Council’s meeting and gained universal support for our application to expand our Rural Medicine Program into Western NSW.

May saw the campus host the very first Experience Day which was a unique event showcasing the campus and the wider university to local schools. Attracting more than 150 students, the Experience Day was a great success.

Construction plans have been finalised for the Dubbo Sports Hub and an official sod-turning ceremony was conducted.

The Collaborative Teacher Aide Pathway program remains a key offering, with the Dubbo stakeholders actively participating in its ongoing success. Enrolment numbers have surpassed 400, 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.

A massive thank you to the Dubbo Campus staff for contributing to all these activities, and especially the broader external engagement team and Kendell Lawson on the Dubbo campus.
In 2023 the Port Macquarie campus ignited with activity delivering hundreds of high impact engagements to include 70 strategically aligned events that enabled the University to connect, support and showcase the University to the incredible community who champion Charles Sturt in the region.

Securing and strengthening regionally significant industry, education and community connections were pivotal in the development of a series of new strategically aligned and impactful projects and partnerships. Charles Sturt joined Business NSW Regional Leaders Mid North Coast supporting two regional summits on campus for over 150 community, industry and education leaders, addressing key themes of health, aged care, skills, education and workforce. Additionally, Charles Sturt hosted the Chief Economist Business NSW complimented by a campus and research showcase.

Excitingly, two international academic conferences were secured for the region, the first time each has been hosted outside a major capital city. The DICTA 2023 Conference brought 100 Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning experts from around the globe to Port Macquarie. The GEA 2024 Conference is set to attract 200 global experts in gender equity and education with a Foundation Partnership secured with national body SAGE to assist facilitate this internationally significant forum on campus.

The Sunrise Campus Markets launched in partnership with the Rotary Club of Port Macquarie Sunrise, bringing 9000 visitors annually to the campus, featuring 60 micro businesses with site proceeds injected back into community projects and an annual scholarship.

I extend sincere thanks to Hali Kramel in my team, and the many valued industry, education and community organisations whose collaborative spirit have enabled us to enrich our connection and impact in our region. We look forward to working together in 2024 towards the vibrance and success of the Mid North Coast.
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 strong regional community, who not only provide key financial funding but strategic support and encouragement ensuring that the program is as diverse and dynamic as those seen in our capital cities.

Over 450 future regional leaders from across the nation participated in the dynamic two-day national forum in Port Macquarie, featuring mainstage keynotes and hands-on masterclasses to uplift and encourage young people to explore dangerous ideas for success.

A partner of the summit since its inception in 2012, Charles Sturt is committed to developing and supporting unique events that assist young people across the country to create a world worth living in. Over 3500 young people have been the beneficiaries of this unique experience across the last 11 years, enabling access to leadership and development opportunities not usually afforded to young people outside metropolitan areas.

Charles Sturt was honoured to work alongside the Luminosity team of 20 dedicated volunteers and more than 70 outstanding regional partner organisations to bring this high energy and impact event to life. The Summit Presenting Partner, Mid North Coast Local Health District, joined forces with Foundation Partners Rydges Port Macquarie and Regional Australia Bank. Key scholarship partners included Business NSW, Mid Coast Council, Telstra, Axiom Connected, Legacy, Rotary Taree North, Rotary Club of Sunrise Port Macquarie, Kempsey CUC, Belle Property University of Newcastle, Hastings Business Women’s Network, Business Port Macquarie, and Charles Sturt First Nations.

Over 3,500 young people have been the beneficiaries of this unique experience across the last 11 years, enabling access to leadership and development opportunities not usually afforded to young people outside metropolitan areas.

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The university continues to support this unique opportunity to link regional communities to the talents of students, lecturers, researchers and industry partners who appeared as guest speakers and facilitators at the event, among 25 other thought leaders from various fields of excellence from around the globe. We look forward to working with the Luminosity Youth Inc team and our community and industry partners towards developing the 2024 summit.

Charles Sturt keynotes and masterclasses

Tanya Hennessy, Charles Sturt alumna and comedian.

Teresa Cochrane, award-winning Charles Sturt First Nations alumna, Oxford Scholar, Honours, Environmental Science Researcher.

Taylah Debreceny, emerging National Weightlifting Champion, third-year physiotherapy student, Charles Sturt Elite Sport and Performer Program.

Andrew Rohde Global IT Partner Axiom Connected Australia collaborated on hands on workshop with Mid North Coast Local Health District on an ultimate speed challenge to create better future.
The Digital Agrifood Summit has established itself as one of the leading regional events on the agricultural calendar, welcoming over 450 producers, industry, government, students and research partners to Charles Sturt’s Wagga Wagga campus, including 22 sponsors, 28 exhibitors and more than 50 world-class speakers. The Summit also attracted international guests from New Zealand, Canada, Kenya and the United Kingdom, cementing the university as a global leader in agriculture and innovation thought leadership.

Hosted by Charles Sturt and Food Agility CRC, this year’s theme, Paddock to Profit, explored how digitally driven insights, systems and tools are helping producers improve sustainability and increase profits.

In addition to showcasing our world-leading agri-tech facilities, the event also established new partnership and research opportunities for our Gulbali Institute and Global Digital Farm project, exposed hundreds of school students to a career in agriculture, and fostered multiple networking and collaboration opportunities for our delegates and AgriPark partners.

Events across the three days included:
- Speaker and Sponsor Welcome Event
- Gulbali Stargazing Dinner
- growAG Networking Breakfast
- Innovation Showcases
- Trade exhibition hall
- Global Digital Farm tours
- ABC Country Hour livestream
- Numerous organisational board meetings.
Regional leaders

Strategic business events and forums

Charles Sturt is proud to have collaborated with Business NSW in the rollout of their Regional Leaders program throughout NSW. Within this program, our Directors of External Engagement have harnessed the platform to engage with businesses and industries, working collectively to advance the economic vision of regional NSW and advocate for solutions to challenges that hinder growth in our regions.

This initiative has brought together some of the brightest business minds, all driven by a common goal of making a meaningful difference in NSW. Our participation has extended to thought leadership event series, exclusive VIP gatherings featuring senior government and corporate leaders, and business roundtables, all aimed at generating concrete solutions to regional challenges.

During the year, we actively participated in several noteworthy events and forums.

• The Future of Health and Aged Care – Creating the narrative for regional success at Port Macquarie: The forum provided a platform for professionals from various industries and sectors to collaborate, explore, and drive the future success of health and aged care on the Mid North Coast.

• Business NSW lunch with the Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP, Treasurer: At this event, Treasurer Chalmers detailed the 2023 Federal budget, and Regional Leaders from across NSW were in attendance to gain insights into this important fiscal document.

• Tour of the Wagga Wagga campus by the Premier of NSW, the Hon Chris Minns MP, and the Minister for Agriculture and Regional NSW, The Hon Tara Moriarty MP: The Premier and Minister visited our campus, engaged with students and staff, and gained hands-on experience by touring our Global Digital Farm, as well as exploring our partnership with Transgrid.

• Business Sydney breakfast with the Premier of NSW, the Hon Chris Minns MP: The Premier shared his plans for the 2023 State Budget, with a particular focus on regional development. He also spoke about the growth in our regions, referencing his time in Wagga Wagga and highlighting some of the wonderful businesses and people he had met.

• Regional Leader Breakfast and Roundtable with the Minister for Agriculture and Regional NSW, The Hon Tara Moriarty MP in Orange: This event provided the Minister with the opportunity to engage directly with the regional leaders and hear first hand some of the issues that the community is facing.

• The Evolving Future of Skills, Training, and Education Summit at Port Macquarie: This summit tackled crucial areas in need of improvement and support and how we can adapt the way we approach employment, education, and training.

Advocacy for our regions

In the Riverina Murray region, the university has actively participated in the development of Business NSW’s advocacy report, “Down to the Wire”. This report comprehensively outlines the extensive list of crucial infrastructure projects slated for implementation in the Riverina Murray over the upcoming years. These projects, while promising substantial economic benefits in terms of job creation and business opportunities, also exert considerable pressure on the region’s infrastructure supply chain and labor market. This dual impact highlights the need for careful planning and management to ensure that the region can efficiently accommodate these projects and their associated growth.
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 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.

Congratulations to the 66 organisations that we’ve had the privilege of supporting in 2023! We look forward to continuing to work with you as you champion a diverse array of initiatives that serve as the backbone of our communities. Your dedication and contributions are invaluable.

| 2023 CUP Grants | 150 Applications | 5 Grant categories | 66 Projects funded | $64,650 Distributed | 7 Regional locations and communities supported |

Funding provided gym equipment for The Orchard in Orange, a safe haven for women and children escaping domestic violence.

Funding enabled Circartus to perform at the Wingham Music Festival.

Funding allowed the Central West Leadership Academy to purchase science equipment for new chemistry labs.
**2023 CUP Awards**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Project title</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>Requested amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forbes Town and District Band</td>
<td>Signage project to promote the activities of the Forbes town band</td>
<td>Central West and Orana</td>
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<td>Orange United Sports Club</td>
<td>Community wellbeing African drums program</td>
<td>Central West and Orana</td>
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<td>Lachlan Arts Council</td>
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<td>Marathon Health</td>
<td>Art Therapy Program</td>
<td>Central West and Orana</td>
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<td>Orange High School</td>
<td>Outdoor garden for sensory opportunities to regulate emotions</td>
<td>Central West and Orana</td>
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<td>Orange Roundnet</td>
<td>Promote and expand the roundnet game in the community</td>
<td>Central West and Orana</td>
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<td>Forbes Early Childhood Centre Inc</td>
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<td>Stuart Town Public School</td>
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<td>The Oriel at Housing Plus</td>
<td>New health and wellbeing activity equipment</td>
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<td>Oberon High School</td>
<td>Student excursion to see Romeo and Juliet performance</td>
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<td>Bathurst Neighbourhood Center</td>
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<td>Bathurst Poets</td>
<td>Bathurst schools’ poetry anthology project for primary and secondary schools</td>
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<td>Central West Women's Health Centre</td>
<td>Series of workshops and activities to develop healthy relationships</td>
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<td>Oberon High School</td>
<td>Sport and physical activities for year 11 and 12 students</td>
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<td>Peel Recreation Reserve Land Manager</td>
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<td>Regional Public School</td>
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<td>Rockley Public School</td>
<td>Science lessons for students</td>
<td>Central West and Orana</td>
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<td>Veritas House</td>
<td>Sports program for disadvantaged kids</td>
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<td>Central West Leadership Academy</td>
<td>Purchase of science equipment for new chemistry laboratories</td>
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<td>Dubbo Touch Association</td>
<td>All Abilities touch football event</td>
<td>Central West and Orana</td>
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<td>LeaderLife Ltd</td>
<td>School holiday arts, crafts and sports activities</td>
<td>Central West and Orana</td>
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<td>Narranome J Jnr Rugby League Football Club</td>
<td>”Narranome Caro Day” to encourage conversations around mental health</td>
<td>Central West and Orana</td>
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<td>Orange Education and Training Co-operatives</td>
<td>Refurbishment of community garden</td>
<td>Central West and Orana</td>
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<td>Parkes East Public School</td>
<td>The purchase of concrete numerical resources</td>
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<td>Wellington High School</td>
<td>Activities for mental health and wellbeing week</td>
<td>Central West and Orana</td>
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<td>The Rotary Club of Orange Inc</td>
<td>Orange sustainable living week and expo</td>
<td>Central West and Orana</td>
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<td>Cobram Secondary College</td>
<td>Outreach program to support disengaged youth with an education coach</td>
<td>Hume</td>
<td>Wangaratta</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digital Technology Advisory Committee Wangaratta</td>
<td>Engaging in STEM through VEX robotics competition</td>
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<td>Gallen Catholic College</td>
<td>Purchase of portable VEX competition field perimeter</td>
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<td>The Beauchamp Chain Gang</td>
<td>Bike safety riding course for local girls</td>
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<td>Wangaratta Primary School</td>
<td>The purchase of VEX Kits and competition equipment</td>
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<td>Beechworth Montessori School</td>
<td>Sustainable and water-wise sensory garden</td>
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<td>Gloucester High School</td>
<td>Providing calculators to financially disadvantaged students</td>
<td>Mid North Coast</td>
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<td>National Council of Women of New South Wales Inc</td>
<td>Women’s health workshop</td>
<td>Mid North Coast</td>
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<td>Nautilus College</td>
<td>The purchase of wobble chairs and wobble cushions to promote student focus</td>
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<td>Port Combined Netball Club</td>
<td>Netball coaching clinic for local players</td>
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<td>Port Macquarie Basketball Association</td>
<td>July holiday camp program</td>
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<td>Port Macquarie Hastings Hockey Association</td>
<td>Purchase of safety equipment for junior members</td>
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<td>St. Agnes Primary School</td>
<td>School cultural workshops</td>
<td>Mid North Coast</td>
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<td>The Mid North Coast Isocianic Society Incorporated</td>
<td>Isocianic storytelling and craft workshop for kids</td>
<td>Mid North Coast</td>
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<td>Wingham Music Festival</td>
<td>Cercetus performance</td>
<td>Mid North Coast</td>
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<td>Hastings Landcare Inc</td>
<td>Tree planting and weed removal in the Hastings Rive</td>
<td>Mid North Coast</td>
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<td>Coolamon Preschool</td>
<td>Positive mental wellbeing program</td>
<td>Riverina</td>
<td>Wagga Wagga</td>
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<td>CWA NSW - Uniquility Evening Branch</td>
<td>Development of a community event kit</td>
<td>Riverina</td>
<td>Wagga Wagga</td>
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<td>Cycling Without Age Australia Wagga Wagga Chapter</td>
<td>A-frame safety sign for trike riders</td>
<td>Riverina</td>
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<td>Kapooka Public School</td>
<td>Purchase of creative industries and theatre performance equipment</td>
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<td>Nova Health Co</td>
<td>Walk and talk group for postpartum mothers</td>
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<td>Riverina Conservatory of Music</td>
<td>Celebrating 100 years of Disney music performance</td>
<td>Riverina</td>
<td>Wagga Wagga</td>
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<td>Survey Park Junior Football Netball Club</td>
<td>Equipment and apparel for girls AFLW program</td>
<td>Riverina</td>
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<td>Up2Date Art Exhibition</td>
<td>Replacement of art hanging system to display art</td>
<td>Riverina</td>
<td>Wagga Wagga</td>
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<td>Wagga Wagga Community Media Ltd</td>
<td>Disability car park shade sails</td>
<td>Riverina</td>
<td>Wagga Wagga</td>
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<td>Wagga Wagga Lake Run and Ride</td>
<td>Community bike and fun run event</td>
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<td>Murrar Public School &amp; P&amp;C Association</td>
<td>School garden composting and biodiversity education program</td>
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<td>Albany Cricket Club</td>
<td>New PA system for club and community events</td>
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<td>Albany</td>
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<td>Border Music Camp</td>
<td>Supporting students in financial need to attend music camp</td>
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<td>Albany</td>
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<td>Catholic College Wodonga</td>
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<td>Corowa High School</td>
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<td>Corowa Public School</td>
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<td>Falcons Hockey Club</td>
<td>Playing and compulsory safety equipment for junior members</td>
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<td>Melrose Primary School</td>
<td>Victorian State School Spectacular 2023</td>
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<td>Mount Beauty Secondary College</td>
<td>Upgrade of school science equipment and purchase of new technology</td>
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<td>Table Top Public School &amp; P&amp;C Association</td>
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<td>Tallangatta Secondary College</td>
<td>The purchase of sound equipment for music performance</td>
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<td>Albury Wodonga Regional Foodshare</td>
<td>The purchase of two new sets of food measuring scales</td>
<td>Murray</td>
<td>Albany</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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