



Country
Universities
Centre

RAPAD CWQ

CUC RAPAD CWQ

NEWSLETTER

BARCALDINE * BEDOURIE * BIRDSVILLE * BLACKALL * BOULIA * LONGREACH * JUNDAH * WINTON



Since our first newsletter, the hubs have been buzzing with activity as students across Central West Queensland continue to study locally, chase new goals, and build confidence in their learning journeys. From first enrolments to steady study routines and exciting next steps, it's been wonderful to see our hubs become an everyday part of community life. Each of our eight hubs reflects its community, but all share the same purpose: making higher education accessible, supported, and local.

In this edition, we're sharing student stories, recent highlights from across the network, and a snapshot of what's coming up next. Whether you're a student, supporter, or community partner, we're glad to have you along as the journey continues.

Our first twelve months have been extraordinary. What began as a single hub in Longreach has grown into a fully operational network of eight study hubs across the RAPAD region in under a year. We've travelled more than 10,000 kilometres and opened hubs in some of Queensland's most remote towns. At times it's been chaotic, but always incredibly rewarding. We've moved from "organised chaos" to something far more sustainable, with strong foundations now firmly in place. Most importantly, the hubs are being used, confirming that the need was real and the model works.

Seeing people who never thought university was an option walk into a hub, log on, sit an exam or submit their first assignment is incredibly powerful. These are students juggling work, family, health challenges and vast distances. For them, access isn't a convenience, it's the difference between studying and not studying at all. Watching confidence grow, hearing "I didn't think this was possible for me," and seeing communities rally around their learners reinforces why place-based education matters.

As we approach our second year, the focus shifts from establishment to impact. The hubs have found their rhythm, with students settling into study routines and making them part of everyday life, whether attending online lectures, sitting exams or quietly working through assignments. Use across the network continues to grow, with students moving between hubs for work, family and travel, highlighting the strength of being part of a connected regional network. Exam periods in particular show just how valuable local, reliable and supported study spaces are.

Community engagement remains at the heart of what we do. From study catch-ups and information sessions to outreach activities and visiting partners, the hubs have become places of connection, collaboration and opportunity. Behind the scenes, we continue to refine systems, strengthen partnerships and focus on what matters most, supporting students to succeed where they live.

With planning well underway for 2026, we're excited about what's ahead. The next phase is about consolidation, quality and long-term outcomes. We've proven the hubs are needed. Now we're building what comes next.



STAY.STUDY.SUCCEED.



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“Being able to study locally has allowed me to build my career while continuing to live and work in regional Queensland, something I value deeply.”



OPENING OUR DOORS TO ALL STUDENTS

We have been fortunate to welcome students from a range of institutions to CUC RAPAD CWQ hubs across the region as part of their work placement and integrated workplace learning. These visits create valuable opportunities for our communities to engage directly with students and, at times, their lecturers to learn more about different fields of study and career pathways. They also give us the opportunity to share our communities with students who have often not ventured beyond capital cities, helping build understanding of regional life, opportunity and impact. Along the way, we've enjoyed memorable evenings of pizza, quizzes and impromptu karaoke, and we're looking forward to doing it all again this year.

CONNECTING WITH UNIVERSITY PARTNERS



In September, all Queensland CUC Centre Managers visited QUT to meet with faculty staff and gain a deeper understanding of how their university supports remote students. In December, the CUC RAPAD CWQ team visited both QUT and UQ. These visits provided valuable insight into the academic and well-being supports available to students, while also allowing us to share how CUCs operate across regional communities. Together, these conversations strengthened our shared understanding of how we can work alongside students and universities to provide the best possible support throughout their degrees.

VR EXPERIENCE IN THE WEST!

Late last year, we sent Jack west to deliver Virtual Reality (VR) career exploration across our most remote communities. The VR exploration enabled students and community members to experience career pathways that are typically not accessible locally, expanding awareness of future study and employment options. The visits resulted in more than 10 new student registrations, with registrations in Boulia almost doubling. Three schools participated in VR career sessions. Overall, the VR exploration strengthened aspiration, engagement, and connection to education across the region.



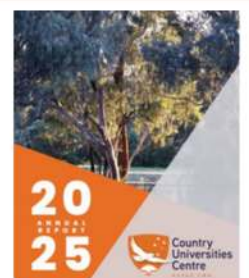
JACK KING

Student Services Coordinator

Jack is our Student Support Coordinator based in Longreach. Originally from Western Australia, he worked as a boilermaker across various regions of Australia before discovering a strong passion for learning and personal development. Jack returned to study and completed a Bachelor of Psychological Science through distance education while living in rural Queensland. He is now preparing to undertake further study and is deeply committed to supporting regional and remote students. Drawing on his lived experience, academic background, and practical life skills, Jack is passionate about helping students in Central West Queensland access education, build confidence, and realise their potential.



“Overall the CUC is a PERFECT place to do assignments and not feel isolated.”



FOLLOW OUR JOURNEY SO FAR IN
OUR 2025 ANNUAL REPORT.

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What a great way to kick off the year! Super organised and already registered at the CUC, recent Longreach State High School graduates Sienna and Mackenzie dropped into the Longreach hub to get their university learning portals sorted. Both will begin studying externally, with Sienna (LSHS 2025 Dux, just saying!) heading into engineering, while Mackenzie will continue her law studies, having already completed two university subjects while finishing her secondary schooling.



We sincerely thank Kim Morrison (Argyle Group) and David Mills for their generous

donation of laptops and monitors. These resources are now being used across CUC RAPAD CWQ hubs, making a tangible difference, helping students stay connected, engaged and supported in their learning, no matter where they are studying from.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Maddison Acton

"I was much more productive when I was at the hub. It was quiet, spacious, and had everything I needed."



Studying externally doesn't have to mean studying alone. For Longreach-based student Maddison Acton, the opening of the CUC RAPAD Central West Queensland hub in 2025 was a gamechanger during her final year of university.

While completing a Bachelor of Speech Pathology (Honours), she began using the Longreach CUC RAPAD hub as soon as it opened, looking for a quiet, dedicated space where she could reliably access the internet for online lectures and tutorials. *"I had recently moved to Longreach and was studying my final year of uni online. I knew that if I was in a space that was quiet and dedicated to studying, working and learning, I would be more focused and more productive."*

The hub quickly became a regular part of Maddi's study routine. With quiet rooms, spacious work areas, printing facilities, and access to a kitchen, she found the environment ideal for completing lectures, tutorials, and exams. Maddi's positive experience extended beyond Longreach. While completing a 10-week block placement in Mount Isa, she also accessed the Mount Isa CUC hub, again finding it a supportive and effective study environment.

Graduating at the end of 2025, Maddi has just taken the next step in her career, commencing her new role as a Speech-Language Pathologist with the Department of Education. Based at Longreach State School, she will be supporting students across the Central West region.

When asked what she would say to others in the community considering study, her advice is simple: *"Give it a go! Whether you're new to studying or in your final years, the hub is beneficial for everyone. Having a dedicated space with reliable internet, printing facilities, and quiet rooms makes a huge difference—especially for exams and assessments."*

SKILLS LOADING...



ELEVATE STUDY SKILLS SESSIONS – 2026

CUC RAPAD will host a series of seven Study Skills Sessions in 2026, delivered by education experts Elevate Education. The sessions support secondary and tertiary students, educators and parents with practical strategies for time management, effective study techniques, managing workload, navigating AI, reducing stress and exam preparation. Sessions are delivered online, with local face-to-face support available at CUC RAPAD hubs, making them accessible to students across the region. Attend all sessions or select those most relevant to you. Register your interest: <https://bit.ly/3Zqapci>



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2025 NATIONAL SCIENCE WEEK ROAD TRIP



In August, CUC RAPAD CWQ partnered with Inspiring Australia Queensland and The University of Queensland to deliver the National Science Week Travelling Launch, visiting ten towns across the region, including all eight CUC RAPAD CWQ hub communities. The program commenced in Blackall before Queensland Chief Scientist Professor Kerrie Wilson officially launched National Science Week in Longreach, highlighting the vital role science plays in everyday life.

The travelling scientist team was led by Dr Anita Milroy, Senior Project Manager, Inspiring Australia Queensland, Advancement and Community Engagement, The University of Queensland. She was joined by Dr Christina Zdanek, an ecologist specialising in snakes and ecosystems; David Corporal, a mechanical engineer, aspiring astronaut and NASA intern; and Luis Villegas-Aguilar, a quantum physicist with a focus on quantum networks and particle research.

The week proved to be a shared learning experience, not only for students across the region, but also for the visiting scientists, who gained valuable insight into life, learning and aspiration in remote communities.

Thanks to the generous support of QCoal, each community received hands-on STEM kits that sparked curiosity and engagement across all age groups. With limited opportunities for regional communities to connect with experts of this calibre, the program was both impactful and inspiring, and we look forward to building on this momentum in 2026.

"After the scientists' visit, the kids' enthusiasm skyrocketed, suddenly we had lots of budding astronauts."

LEADER TODAY 09.01.26

LeaderToday.com.au NEWS

Study hubs ready

By McKenzie Neal

Students across Central West Queensland are set to benefit from expanded support and new initiatives in 2026, as the region's Country Universities Centre network enters the new year with a continued focus on helping locals study and succeed where they live.

Regional network manager Liza Cameron said the year ahead would build on the strong foundations established since the study hubs opened, with an emphasis on practical support, stronger education pathways and growing opportunities for regional students.

A key priority for 2026 is ongoing collaboration with secondary schools across the Central West to strengthen pathways into tertiary education and raise awareness of local study options before students leave school.

This work will be supported by continued growth in the network's university contacts and education partners, giving students greater choice and flexibility in their study options.

Mrs Cameron said on-the-ground support would remain central to the model, with staff assisting students to navigate university systems that can often be overwhelming for first-time or remote learners.

This includes help with learning portals, subject enrolments, understanding course requirements and managing study expectations.

Seven study skills sessions will be delivered throughout 2026, supported by education specialists from Elevate Education.

The sessions will be delivered virtually, with face-to-face support provided locally by CUC student support teams within each hub to ensure students across the region have equal access re-



Longreach's Jack King, Liza Cameron, Joy McClymont.

gardless of location.

A bursary program has also been introduced to assist students with practical study costs, including technology, internet connectivity and essential learning resources. Applications for the Semester 1 bursaries are now open, with registered students encouraged to apply.

The year ahead will also see a continued focus on STEM and career exploration, building on the success of the 2025 National Science Week travelling launch.

Further STEM and career-focused initiatives are planned, alongside attendance at events including the GrowQ Innovation Expo, Central

West Carers Expo, Westech Field Days and local annual shows.

Strong early engagement has already been recorded, with students registering for study in 2026 across the region.

The hubs continue to provide free, supported study spaces equipped with high-speed internet and local assistance, allowing students to study online without leaving their communities.

Located in Longreach, Winton, Barcaldine, Blackall, Boulia, Bedourie, Birdsville and Jundah, the study hubs support students across one of Queensland's most geographically dispersed regions.

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2025
SNAP
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181
students



18
areas of
study



54
education
institutions