

Tertiary Education Hub

Enabling participation in education and addressing the staffing crisis.

Overview

Murrindindi Shire Council is working with a Community Working Group, to establish a Tertiary Education hub with Country university Centres, who already operate in 18 locations across eastern Australia supporting 2,100 registered students participate in higher education.

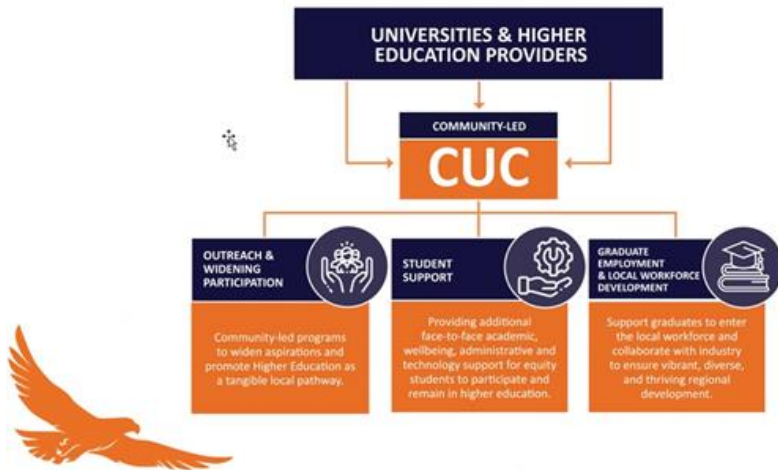
The Tertiary Education hub will be centrally located to support the whole Shire, to undertake University and Tafe Courses in a safe and supported environment. This will compliment the existing Secondary schools, Community houses, University of the Third Age and regional Tafe facilities, in providing opportunities and removing further barriers to participation. The centre will:

- provide resources and infrastructure to support learners in accessing online content of their particular university or TAFE course,
- provide local expertise to mentor, support and guide student learning,
- provide other educational and social support,
- provide high speed internet connection,
- Provide a safe / accessible venue for extended hours.

A funding round has recently opened and closes in December 2023, and we are actively exploring opportunities within the Shire to align with this timing.

Concept

[Country University Centres](#) successfully operate across Eastern Australia in providing support for the Centres, students and communities. The centres have a history of engaging with communities, local businesses to remove barriers to participation and address key skills shortages. The existing centres have demonstrated the early growth is from within the community and school leavers joining the centre in subsequent years.



The Tertiary Education Centre will:

- Provide a safe, secure, accessible, adult online study environment.
- Have high speed and reliable internet access.
- Provide a supportive environment through staff, peers, and mentors.

The Community Steering group have endorsed:

- Utilise the successful and proven Country University Centre approach.
- The centre to support locals participate locally in higher education by removing a barrier to participation.
- A focus on addressing skills shortages and growing the capacity within our community.
- The Federal Government Commissioned, Deloitte Report November 2021, as a top 10 priority in Australia for a Regional University Centre.
- The centre being located in Yea in an existing building.
- To explore an equipped, designated study space in Alexandra or surrounds
- The Centre supporting both Tafe and University students aligning with federal Government directions.
- A supported environment helps address high remote drop out rates.
- Other centres have noted the high latent demand / interest in higher education when supported locally.
- Seeking funding in the first round closing in December 2023.
- Engagement with Business and other learning centres.
- Visit Country University Centres to see them operating firsthand.

Target areas

- Health Care, Aged Care.
- Early Education and Childcare.
- Building, including houseboat building.
- Social work and community services.
- Hospitality.
- Agriculture.
- Recreation and Nature Tourism.
- Plus, importantly support to enable individuals to realise their dreams.

Project

- Identify potential locations for the centre (300 to 400m²), visible, safe and accessible.
- Develop the proposal with Country University Centres including:
 - Design and planning.
 - Capital and operating costs.
 - The demand and benefit.
- Identify Inaugural Board for application process.
- Develop the local narrative to support the application.

Challenges Addressed

- Chronic staff shortage in regions: The project tackles the impediment faced by employers, businesses, and service sectors due to the lack of staff.
- Workers transitioning to new industries: The initiative supports workers in trying and transitioning to new industries.
- Worker upskilling and transition concerns: It addresses workers' fears and obstacles related to upskilling or transitioning.
- Lack of training opportunities in small regional centres.
- Students attending post-secondary studies can continue to contribute to their community without needing to leave the shire.

Shire of Murrindindi

North East Victoria, 12 key towns, pop. 15,000, covering 3,880 km²