

MAYORAL MINUTE - COUNTRY UNIVERSITIES CENTRE

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REPORT AUTHOR: MAYOR

2. PURPOSE:

To progress the establishment of a Country Universities Centre in Tumut.

3. MAYORAL RECOMMENDATION:

THAT COUNCIL

1. **Form a Country Universities Centre Working Party consisting of 1 councillor and 1 staff member to progress the establishment of a Country Universities Centre in Tumut;**
2. **Actively seek funding through the Country Universities Centre Working Party;**
3. **Receive a report to the November 2023 Ordinary Meeting of Council on the progress of the Country Universities Working Party.**

4. REPORT:

The Country Universities Centre (CUC) creates learning and study places designed for regional people by regional people - community owned, operated and supported.

As stated on their website, regional people are less than half as likely to gain a bachelor qualification compared to their metropolitan counterparts. Higher education opportunities offered by government or universities has not resulted in any marked improvements and participation has remained stagnate at around 20% for over 30 years.

The CUC model operates in communities where universities cannot or will not go.

CUC communities have the following characteristics:

- Strong local community support
- Significant distance from existing university infrastructure
- High representation of students from equity groups such as Regional, low socioeconomic status (SES), and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Low higher education participation and bachelor attainment rates in the region
- Small to medium-sized regional towns
- Clear regional development goals

There are currently 10 CUCs in NSW which demonstrates that a community-driven university led by an independent local Board of Directors is undoubtedly effective. Of these 10 centres, the closest to Tumut are the centres in Cooma and Goulburn; both a fair distance for any Snowy Valleys residents to travel to.

A Country Universities Centre in Tumut would provide equitable access for Snowy Valleys residents to quality tertiary education, inject knowledge and qualifications into the local workforce and ensure the continued growth of our local government area.

5. ATTACHMENTS

Nil.