CHANGEMAKER
STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

CQUNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA
WILL CHANGE THE WORLD
FOR THE BETTER

OFFICE OF SOCIAL INNOVATION
APRIL 2019
Drawing on its history and the pioneering work of its founders, CQUniversity’s vision is to be Australia’s most engaged university. Over the past decade the University has pursued this vision relentlessly, investing in staff and building the organisational capacity to achieve it. The engagement agenda has morphed over time from an organisational strategy to be embedded into the DNA of the organisation, with a clear focus on engagement in support of sustainable communities.

The role of social innovation in the University’s current and future activities is highlighted as a priority in the University Council’s Daring to be Different strategy launched in 2017. CQUniversity’s commitment to giving back 1% of annual turnover to the communities that it serves is a noble and unprecedented initiative in Australian higher education. This giving back takes the form of direct financial support, donations of campus resources, and inputs of staff time and intellectual capacity to problem solving and serving in voluntary roles.

As an engaged university with a crisp and clear focus on communities, CQUniversity has a deep-seated desire to change the world for the better. Key to this goal is our social innovation strategy and impact.

As Australia’s only Ashoka U Changemaker Campus, CQUniversity focuses on equipping students, staff and communities with the skills needed to address entrenched social and environmental issues, thereby driving transformation and working for a better collective future.

CQUniversity’s intended social and environmental impact is brought to life through four major commitments:

» Strategic Directions – This strategy commits to five broad areas of focus for social innovation activity and social impact research, and provide a clear link to the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals, an international framework that allows organisations to collaborate and cross-reference their work.

» Centre for Changemaking – In order to provide a linking mechanism across the various components of changemaking activity in the University, the Centre for Changemaking will emerge in late 2018. The Centre will link social impact research emerging from major CQUniversity Institutes and Centres, and will auspice the work of the current Office of Social Innovation. Student-focused initiatives under the Centre will include the Change Champion national student ambassador program; regional innovation hubs and Social Innovation Studios; and, active citizenship programs that support students’ participation in volunteering, and community-based service learning.

» iChange Social Innovation Orientation Program and Undergraduate Curriculum Enhancement – The 2018 launch of iChange, an online program introducing social innovation and the University’s role in Australia-wide social change initiatives, connects all CQUniversity students to social change theory and opportunities. In addition to iChange, between 2019 and 2021 all CQUniversity undergraduate degrees will be strengthened to include explicit and implicit skills, knowledge and experiences that directly link discipline-specific learning to addressing major social issues within Australia and internationally. Students will be provided opportunities to participate in local and international volunteering, internship and extra-curricular activities that support their development as Australia’s future changemakers.

» Social Procurement – CQUniversity is committed to social procurement as part of its social innovation and sustainability obligations. Commencing in 2018, the University will formalise a social procurement plan that targets positive spending in areas that support the broad social issues outlined in the Changemaker Strategic Directions.

**CHANGEMAKER STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS**

In order to focus the current and emerging social impact and innovation work of the University, five broad Strategic Directions have been identified. Each of the Directions has Key Projects linked to it, to provide a unifying focus, allowing multiple students and staff to work on and around the particular thematic area.

These Key Projects allow the University to target support through investment in staff and student resources, financial investment and/or research partnerships in order to align projects to the five Initiatives, and to achieve the greatest benefit to the community and students. The relationship between the Strategic Directions and the Key Projects is outlined in the figure below.
Bright Youth Futures

CQU was founded on support for educational attainment of young people from low-socio-economic, first-in-family and regional and rural backgrounds. This support logically extends beyond merely providing educational opportunities, to also ensuring a range of pathways into study, initiatives to help students thrive, and efforts to deepen students’ focus on their ambitions, to make meaningful career contributions in innovation, entrepreneurship and social impact.

Our Bright Youth Futures work will have a specific focus on young people from primary school to 25 years, particularly those from low-socio-economic, regional and remote backgrounds. Through engaged research into factors affecting educational access and attainment, the role of universities and policy in providing equitable access to education, and a focus on improving retention rates for CQU’s significant population of first-in-family and Indigenous students, we will improve and grow opportunities for young people to expand their futures.

With a focus on empowering the next generation of changemakers with adaptable and future-focused skills, our commitment to embedding social innovation skills, knowledge and experiences across every undergraduate degree by 2021 is underpinned by our membership of the Ashoka U network. Commmencing with the launch of the iChange Social Innovation Orientation Program in 2018, students in all disciplines will gain the skills and aptitudes to apply a ‘social lens’ to their discipline, recognising the role that they can play in addressing social and environmental issues.

With a target for 20% of all graduating students undertaking a global outbound study tour during their degree program, and for 50% of all students participating in a social innovation or social enterprise project during their studies, CQU is focused on preparing our students with a toolkit of collaborative problem-solving skills that support them to adapt to a global, fast-changing employment environment.

Supporting Educational Aspirations for Regional Youth

CQU has the highest proportion of low socio-economic and first-in-family students of any higher education institution in Australia, and a significant proportion of Indigenous students, and students from rural and remote locations. CQU successfully attracts these students and supports them to graduate not only through serving regional and under-served locations, but also by providing a wide range of student supports, including the Tertiary Entrance Program (Indigenous) and Skills for Tertiary Education Preparatory Studies, the Academic Learning Centre, scholarships and bursaries, and proactive communication and intervention for struggling students.

Between 2007 and 2017, CQU saw a 51 per cent increase in the number of students undertaking a degree or research program, and a simultaneous improvement in student retention to more than 75 per cent. This growth is a direct result of CQU’s unique suite of enablers and student support initiatives. CQU continues to improve and develop these initiatives through the Student Retention Project, with evidence-based input and review from CQU’s Centre for Regional Advancement of Learning, Equity, Access and Participation (LEAP).

Salaam Baalak Trust: Scholarships, Social Enterprise and Student Opportunities

CQU’s six-year partnership with Salaam Baalak Trust in Delhi, India, and sponsorship of its social enterprise City Walk, has delivered training and employment opportunities for former street children to earn income as local tour guides. Our scholarships for students supported by Salaam Baalak Trust have seen dozens of young people escape their background of poverty, attending Indian universities, and pursuing careers in engineering, commerce, fashion design and tourism.

Since 2015, regular student exchange opportunities have also increased Australian student awareness of homelessness and disadvantage in India, as they’ve volunteered alongside the Salaam Baalak Trust team. These ongoing opportunities across a range of disciplines further connect CQU students and graduates to Salaam Baalak Trust’s work, cause and socially innovative approach.
MOVING PERSPECTIVES WITH MOBILITY ORIENTEERING
As part of Melbourne Knowledge Week 2018, An Orienteering Experience of Disability: The Ups and Downs of Mobility Dependence attracted designers, city planners, architects and transport users to consider barriers and opportunities within public space.

Coordinated by the Office of Social Innovation and the Occupational Therapy program, with the support of Travellers Aid Australia, Guide Dogs Victoria and Southern Cross Station, the event took participants through the city, with sight and mobility purposefully limited.

An ideation workshop, facilitated by people with lived experience of mobility challenges, saw stakeholders from the disability, ageing and design communities then capture team proposals for improvements.

The event built on CQUniversity’s partnership with City of Melbourne for the Open Innovation Competition, a public challenge to design navigation improvements for the city.

HEALTHY AND CONNECTED COMMUNITIES
CQUniversity’s innovation, expertise, education and training across a range of health, well-being and community-based disciplines directly contributes to resilient, creative and future-focused communities across Australia, and in key international locations with strategic importance for our institution.

CQUniversity believes that healthy communities need more than health care providers – they need access to fresh, healthy and affordable food, fitness and recreation facilities, and a wide range of opportunities for connectedness and community purpose. Through local partnerships, research priorities, and social innovation initiatives, CQUniversity is working with regional areas in Australia and internationally to empower the physical and mental health, well-being and safety of all residents, and the community at large.

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CQUniversity has been building partnerships in Nepal for a decade, especially through the School of Nursing and Midwifery’s work in Pokhara. With clinical placements in Pokhara’s Fishtail Hospital and Research Centre and Gandaki Hospital, as well as regional health camps, and health outreach with the Children of Nepal, a not-for-profit providing shelter and care to homeless and destitute children, hundreds of CQUniversity students have travelled to Nepal and learnt from these innovative regional providers.

Since then, CQUniversity has established a memorandum of understanding with Pokhara University for student placements, and social innovation projects. This partnership is complemented by CQUni sponsorship of Shree Bhagawati Basic School, and research programs with Seven Women Nepal social enterprise.

QUEENSLAND CENTRE FOR DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE RESEARCH
Based in Mackay, the Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research (QCDFVR) contributes to the prevention of domestic and family violence by informing, promoting and supporting individuals, communities, services and governments in violence prevention and response. Through leadership in research, professional development, education and community engagement, QCDFVR initiates, undertakes and collaborates on innovative and interdisciplinary research.

This work includes the 18-month evaluation of Queensland Government integrated response trials in Logan-Beenleigh, Cherbourg and Mt Isa, focusing on the socially innovative co-design and development of new response models at each site. The researchers’ findings will also guide improvements to the trial sites and inform a state-wide rollout. QCDFVR has also developed a suite of training programs and workshops for workers in the family violence intervention sector, ensuring frontline responders are supported by evidence-based education and systems, as recommended by the Queensland Domestic Violence Taskforce’s Not Now, Not Ever report.
PARTNERSHIP WITH FIRST NATIONS’ PEOPLES

CQUniversity has a proud history of supporting Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander people in education and employment. With leadership from our Office of Indigenous Engagement, social innovation continues to provide proactive and engaged support to Indigenous people and communities to develop sustainable, self-determining futures, with positive health outcomes and economic prosperity at the fore.

CQUniversity offers a wide range of opportunities to Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander people, developed in close consult with Indigenous community stakeholders. These include the Tertiary Entrance Program, 14 Indigenous scholarships initiatives, and training, education, research and employment opportunities through partnerships with community organisations, the National Indigenous Research and Knowledges Network (NIRAKN) and the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience.

WOOABINDA EDUCATION AND TRAINING
Woorabinda, south-west of Rockhampton in Central Queensland, is home to more than 800 Aboriginal people, and is the region’s biggest Indigenous community. The proximity to CQUniversity’s headquarters has meant a long-running relationship, with particular focus on education and training delivery, and research projects to support community and economic development.

Ongoing projects include Education student placements and alumni projects at Woorabinda State School, which leads Queensland for Indigenous community attendance rates, as well as sponsorship of festivals and events, on-site vocational training delivery programs, support for art and story-telling initiatives, and professional development opportunities for residents through the Office of Indigenous Engagement.

YARRABAH INNOVATION HUB
CQUniversity’s project to establish an education, training and innovation hub in the Yarrabah Aboriginal community in Far North Queensland, with the support of the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council and the Yarrabah Leadership Forum, will contribute to building future generations of creative, employed, sustainable and culturally strong young people, to lead and inspire more than 3500 Aboriginal people living in the area.

GIDARJIL SEA RANGERS
Since 2015, CQUniversity has worked with Gidarjil Development Corporation to establish and deliver training programs for young Gurang and Gooreng Gooreng people across Gladstone and Bundaberg.

The Sea Rangers training program prioritises connection to country and to water, while also incorporating job-ready skills across horticulture, land management and conservation.

Delivered in partnership with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, the ongoing training provides a range of opportunities for graduates, and pathways into other CQUniversity conservation and Indigenous programs.

SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CQUniversity is a powerful institution with broad reach across five states of Australia. The resources of our institution underpin strong employment outcomes, capacity development and community support in many regions. Education and employment opportunities provided to current and future leaders across Australia directly contributes to the growth and sustainability of regional Australia.

Through strong partnerships in each of the regions, senior stakeholders from community, government and industry support the work of the University in the form of Region Engagement Committees. Tasked with determining effective ways for CQUniversity to serve each community, powerful projects have emerged in youth-led community planning, infrastructure and tourism development and opportunities to support not-for-profit organisations through use of CQUniversity facilities, volunteering and service-learning initiatives and research.

SOCIAL PROCUREMENT STRATEGY
CQUniversity has long been committed to a “buy local” approach in all its procurement, and in 2018 is reviewing procurement activity to also prioritise social procurement. Through this review, the University will focus on creating greater social value with its purchasing spend, through partnerships with Indigenous social enterprise, sustainable local production, and social impact and enterprise ventures.

Early social procurement initiatives in individual regions will be elevated with a particular focus on supporting the emergence of social enterprise across regional Queensland.

MACKAY REGIONAL SPORTS PRECINCT
In partnership with Mackay Regional Council and the Federal Government, CQUniversity is leading the charge to establish the Mackay Regional Sports Precinct on its existing campus grounds at Goralba.

With the Aquatic Centre and Athletics Track and Field currently under construction, the full proposed development is valued at $72 million, with projected community benefits for employment, social cohesion, increased community health and well-being, and tourism.

CQUniversity will also use the precinct facilities for education, training and hands-on experience for popular programs including Exercise and Sport Science, Physiotherapy, Podiatry, Health Promotion, Occupational Therapy, Chiropractic Science and Medical Imaging and Sonography. The facilities and on-site health, education and research offerings will attract and retain high-level sporting talent to train and compete at the facility.

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LOOKING AFTER OUR PLANET

A sustainable future for all relies on preservation and protection of our environmental and ecological resources. Our increasing focus on the natural resources at our doorstep provides a focal point for engagement with community, business and government.

CQUniversity’s focus on environmental research, alternative energies and whole-systems thinking in marine research, agriculture, social design and building practice is brought to life through commitments in research and in the development of our own operations and facilities.

CQUniversity Sustainability Program

Operating across five states and more than 25 locations, our commitment to sustainable operations is embedded in the CQUniversity Sustainability Framework 2016 – 2030, and includes focus across operations including teaching, research, waste, energy and water, estate and built environment, social and community engagement and biodiversity. Recent investment in facilities includes installing solar panels, improving rain water capture and recycling, installing LED lighting and recycling operations in all new facilities, with comprehensive plans to retrofit existing facilities for improved green operations to achieve ambitious targets outlined in the Framework.

COASTAL MARINE ECOSYSTEMS RESEARCH CENTRE

Work is underway to develop a Coastal Marine Ecosystems Research Centre at CQUniversity’s Gladstone Marina campus, which sits within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Supported by the Federal Government’s Reef 2050 Plan, the $22 million centre would be a world-class research facility, with strong collaborative and innovative partnerships with industry, coastal managers, and community stakeholders, to preserve and enhance the benefits of Australia’s coastal environments. Through proactive technology including green engineering and ecological restoration, the centre looks to support and grow Australia’s “blue economy”, rather than passively monitor the Great Barrier Reef and other vital coastal ecosystems.

SUSTAINABLE SHELTER PUTS HEART INTO EMERGENCY HOMES

Thousands of Australians face the threat of natural disasters such as cyclones, bushfires and storms hitting communities and homes. Three CQUniversity Engineering students saw this reality as an opportunity for creatively use their engineering skills for social good.

The Shelter Project uses waste materials, and renewable energy, to quickly create temporary homes for survivors, in their own communities. The business plan, which could also address long-term homelessness and disadvantage, also creates opportunities for skill development and income generation for marginalised people, in the development of pallet house kits.

Students Jessica Kahl, Angus Hughes and Mattison Rose sought input from local government, industry and social support agencies, to develop solid and tangible designs for pallet housing, and for a program to deliver it quickly, efficiently, and with maximum impact.

Waste reduction was built into the design through use of recycled pallets donated by industry, and the addition of basic solar panels also ensured environmentally-friendly energy for comfort and amenities.

While the team faced a range of challenges in their social enterprise design, their persistence saw The Shelter Project win The Big Idea competition in 2014, beating other university teams from across Australia.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION: PATHWAYS TO CHANGEMAKING

The Changemaker Strategic Directions have been developed with a focus on three key areas:

- CQUniversity’s longstanding vision of supporting the environmental, educational and economic aspirations, and the health and development, of people living in regional Australia and in countries from which we welcome international students,
- Linking the work of the University to the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. These internationally-recognised goals (Appendix One) provide clear, high-level targets and priorities to guide the University’s social innovation activities and ambitions, and provide an ability to ensure the University’s work supports that of other organisations around the world, working towards addressing entrenched issues.
- Capitalising upon and grouping the University’s existing areas of research and teaching strength.

To provide further opportunities for students to utilise the social innovation skills they are developing through the Changemaker program, curriculum and through the strategic projects, two additional enabling programs will be developed through the Centre for Changemaking:

Active Citizenship Centre: National, service-learning and volunteering program connecting students with not-for-profit organisations to undertake project work, thereby expanding the workforce capacity of regional organisations and providing practical work experience for students within Australia.

Social Innovation Regional Studios: Social innovation experiences for CQUniversity students and local young people to work with community partner organisations over an extended period to focus on issues that really matter to the local community.

INTRODUCING THE CENTRE FOR CHANGEMAKING

CQUUniversity’s social impact will increasingly be measured and assessed in terms of:

» benefit to local communities;
» contribution to the field of social innovation best-practice;
» impact for students participating in social innovation activity; and
» impact on CQUUniversity’s reach within the social innovation and enterprise sectors in Australia and beyond.

Research across these criteria will determine the efficacy of CQUUniversity’s approach, identify new location- and issue-specific innovative practices, and build internal and external support for future investment of resources into ongoing projects.

Under the auspices of the Centre for Changemaking, dedicated social innovation researchers will work alongside existing CQUUniversity research organisations, to develop and grow social innovation projects, and to support social innovation practice in current and emerging areas of research. These projects will focus on issues and themes within CQUUniversity’s five Strategic Directions for social innovation.

In 2018, CQUUniversity will establish the Centre for Changemaking, and commence our second internal social innovation research project, building on the success of the iChange social-economic impact assessment project.

The Centre for Changemaking operations will also include the existing Office of Social Innovation, as it continues to deliver a wide and growing range of community-focused projects and initiatives, and to empower students to participate in real-world social change through their studies and in extra-curricular activity. These initiatives include integration of social innovation content across all undergraduate degrees from 2019, the iChange social innovation orientation program, Regional Innovation Hubs and Social Innovation Studios, the Active Citizenship Program, national Change Champion roles for students, The Big Idea social enterprise competition, a range of localised events and activities, and participation in international opportunities such as Ashoka U programs.

To partner with CQUUniversity across a wide range of social innovation opportunities, please contact:

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