

Pilbara Kimberley
University Centres

3 YEAR FUNDING AGREEMENT 2024 PROPOSAL 2027



PILBARA KIMBERLEY UNIVERSITY CENTRES

The Pilbara Kimberley Universities Centre (PKUC) is a not-for-profit, incorporated association, which forms part of the Federal Government Department to Education's Regional University Study Hub Programme. The Regional University Study Hubs help students in regional and remote areas access higher education without having to leave their community. They provide student support and campus-style facilities for students who study online.

The PKUC has a universities centre campus located in Karratha, two study hubs located in Port Hedland and Broome with two further study hubs to be established in Onslow and Tom Price in mid 2024.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE **PILBARA** UNIVERSITIES CENTRE (PUC)

In 2019 the Pilbara Universities Centre (PUC) received \$3m (grant) from the Federal Government to establish a pilot university study centre in Karratha and a study hub in Port Hedland. The PUC subsequently received \$550,000 from the Pilbara Development Commission to assist with the set up & fit out of the PUC's Karratha premises located at L1, the Quarter.

In July 2022 the Federal Government awarded a further \$3,784,321 to the PUC to continue its Karratha and Port Hedland operations for a further 4 years (until 30 June 2026).



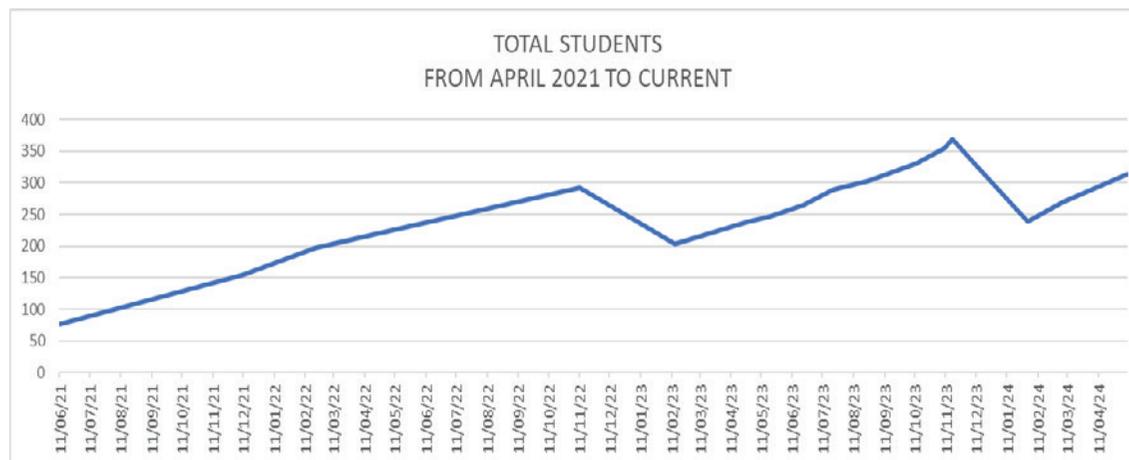
CREATION OF THE PILBARA **KIMBERLEY** UNIVERSITY CENTRES

In October 2022 the PUC received \$875,600 to establish a study hub in Broome and the Pilbara Kimberley University Centres was born! In April 2024 the Federal Government announced 2 additional Pilbara study hubs in Onslow and Tom Price as part of a hub and spoke model with Karratha as the 'Head Campus' supporting 4 study hubs (Tom Price, Onslow, Port Hedland and Broome). The PKUC will receive \$1,109,517 as part of a 3 year funding agreement to establish these 2 new hubs.

PKUC ACHIEVEMENTS

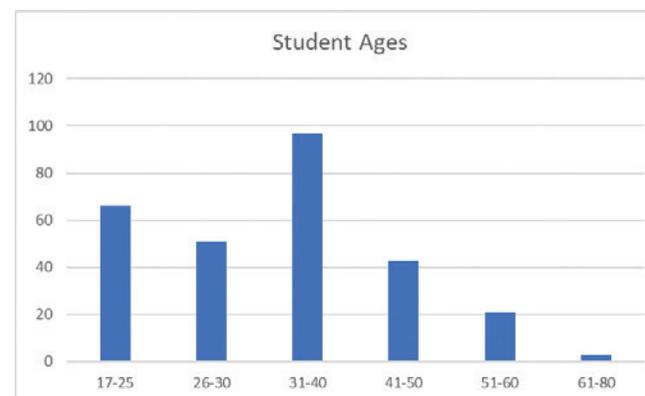
TOTAL STUDENTS

The PKUC opened its Karratha campus in mid 2020 with an initial 3 face to face students. The PKUC now supports annually close to 400 face-to-face students with over 600 students having received support from the PKUC since it opened its doors. The vast majority of those students are located in the City of Karratha. PKUC students are diverse, currently studying 76 different courses at 20 different universities and higher education institutions.



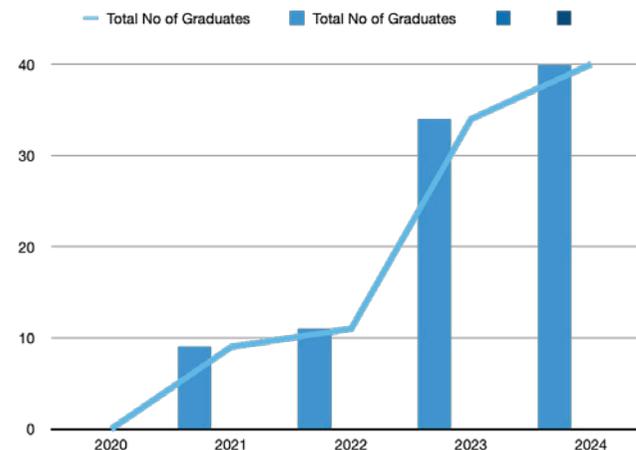
GRADUATES

Since 2021 the PKUC has graduated 54 students with a further 32+ students predicted to graduate in 2024. Graduates have attained qualifications ranging from Certificate IV to PhDs; over a third of PKUC graduated have completed preparation courses for university and moved onto Bachelor degrees; just under a third have completed Bachelor degrees and a similar portion have completed Graduate Certificates. The PKUC anticipates that by 2025 it will have graduated 50 local nurses.



STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

As the age of the PKUC increases the average age of its students decrease and its student base becomes more diverse with increasing school leavers, men and Aboriginal & Torres Strait islander students pursuing higher education with the support of the PKUC.



PARTNERSHIPS

UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

The PKUC has 5 university partnership with CQUni, Curtin University, ECU, University of Tasmania and Charles Darwin University to provide students services and support to its Pilbara & Kimberley based students.

The PKUC is currently discussing student support opportunities & partnerships with UWA, Murdoch University and the University of Notre Dame, particularly it's indigenous and medical students.

The PKUC has also identified opportunities to partner with University of New England, University of Southern Queensland, James Cook University and Griffith University to explore opportunities in planning, surveying, sports science, marine and environmental science.



PKUC FUNDING PARTNERS & SPONSORSHIPS

The PKUC's current key funding partners are the Federal Department of Education and the City of Karratha, both organisations who have supported the PKUC since its inception. However, over the past years the PKUC has received grants and funding support from a wide range of organisations for a range of matters including: graduation, purchase of nursing equipment, scholarships, programmes such as STEM in Sport, Community English and PKUC's Year 13 Programme.



PKUC'S STRATEGIC FOCUS

The PKUC supports all students living in the Pilbara interested in or pursuing higher education, from high school to post graduate qualifications irrespective of their age, background, course or academic institution. However, notwithstanding its universal support for higher education the PKUC's strategic focus is directed towards the following two pillars: Equity of Access to Education and Skills & Workforce Development.

1. EQUITY OF ACCESS TO EDUCATION

The Pilbara region in Western Australia is one of the largest and most remote regional centres in Australia. It is a key region for the strategic development of both Western Australia and Northern Australia. All levels of government have set aspirational targets for population and economic growth and diversification in the Pilbara to develop vibrant and dynamic regional communities, where people want to live, work, have families and invest long into the future. Yet, the impediments to accessing quality and equitable university education in the Pilbara are significant. Factors of distance, remoteness and accessibility are major obstacles in attaining higher education qualifications. Purely online delivery is not an appropriate study mode, nor a solution to inequality, in encouraging and motivating regional and remote students who are already severely disadvantaged by limited access to higher education. Community surveys undertaken by local governments continually emphasise the importance of education to the local community. Lack of quality education opportunities and services are one of the key reasons why people leave the Pilbara.

In regions such as the Pilbara, 'bricks and mortar' campuses of established Australian universities are unfeasible. The PKUC model seeks to alleviate the impediments to accessing quality university education in the Pilbara with a model that is appropriate for and responsive to its regional community.



EQUITY OF ACCESS INITIATIVES

Below are example of courses and education initiatives the PKUC have developed and delivered in the City of Karratha that address equity of access to education:

- **LEARNING HOW TO LEARN:** Developed by the PKUC for women prisoners incarcerated at Roebourne Regional Prison). This course is aimed at developing learning skills in students with limited numeracy and literacy.
- **UNIVERSITY BRIDGING/ ENABLING COURSES:** (CQUni's STEPS programme & Curtin Uni's UniReady Programme). Historically, only a small percentage of Karratha secondary school students complete ATAR as a pathway to university. Accordingly the PKUC provides face to face support (academic & pastoral) to local enabling students, wishing to pursue higher education qualifications.
- **CERTIFICATE IV IN LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT:** (Indigenous Students Only): a bespoke programme, designed and contextualised by the PKUC specifically for locally based, Pilbara indigenous employees and community members delivered face to face in Karratha by PKUC & TrainWest academics.
- **CAREER COUNSELLING & EDUCATION GUIDANCE SERVICES:** Including the PKUC's Pilbara contextualised Yr13 Programme and Capability Co psychometric testing (these services are provided by PKUC working closely with St Lukes' College, Karratha Senior High School and other schools, mature aged students looking to enter (or re-enter the workforce), change jobs or pursue career promotion, all from a range of backgrounds.
- **IELS EXAM INVIGILATION:** The PKUC supports the delivery of IELTS testing in Karratha to migrants seeking English language proficiency. This service was previously unavailable and migrants had to make multiple (expensive) trips to Perth.
- **STEM IN SPORT:** this programme focusses on developing an interest and understanding in STEM through sport. The programme also provides world class combines testing and analysis to local high performance athletes.
- **COMMUNITY ENGLISH:** a bespoke programme aimed at providing community information and English language skills to locally based migrants to assist with their English language proficiency and assimilation into the Pilbara community.
- **EDUCATION & CAREER GUIDANCE EVENINGS:** These events are focussed on Engineering & the Sciences, Nursing & Allied Health and General Career Guidance which provide important information that allow locals to make informed decisions about their education pathways and desired careers.
- **LOCAL GRADUATIONS:** Attending graduation in Perth is both difficult and expensive. The PKUC holds its Pilbara graduation ceremony annually in Karratha at the Red Earth Arts Precinct.



2. SKILLS GROWTH & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

The Pilbara region (as does many parts of Australia) suffers from a lack of skilled workers. There are many challenges associated with addressing this problem which is only set to continue and grow with nearly \$200 billion worth of projects under consideration, committed or under construction in the Pilbara region. Constrained by lack of housing, a sensible strategy to implement is to 'grow your own'. The PKUC works with its industry partners to identify key skills and qualifications desired by industry for its current and future workforce and as a result has partnered with universities to deliver the below qualifications in a supported model (online and face to face academic support):

Technical Courses



Workforce Demand

In March 2022, the Pilbara DAMA, developed in partnership with the City of Karratha and the Town of Port Hedland came into effect and in January 2024 was expanded to include the Shire of East Pilbara and an additional 69 occupations. The Pilbara DAMA exists to provide businesses in the City of Karratha, the Town of Port Hedland and the Shire of East Pilbara with a mechanism to address current workforce shortages and to support future workforce planning.

Currently there are 135 occupations which are eligible for sponsorship under the Pilbara DAMA including the following: registered nurse, social work, occupational therapist, speech pathology, clinical psychologist and engineer (electrical, mechanical, civil, structural). These 6 occupations require university qualifications and the PKUC has focused on how they enable local students to pursue these career pathways without having to leave the Pilbara which often results in the students not returning.

The first qualification the PKUC has focussed on was nursing and the success of this programme has been incredible with many of our graduates now pursuing jobs and careers in their local regional hospitals. The PKUC now aims to replicate the success of nursing in the key workforce areas of:

- Allied health
- Education
- Engineering & technical skills

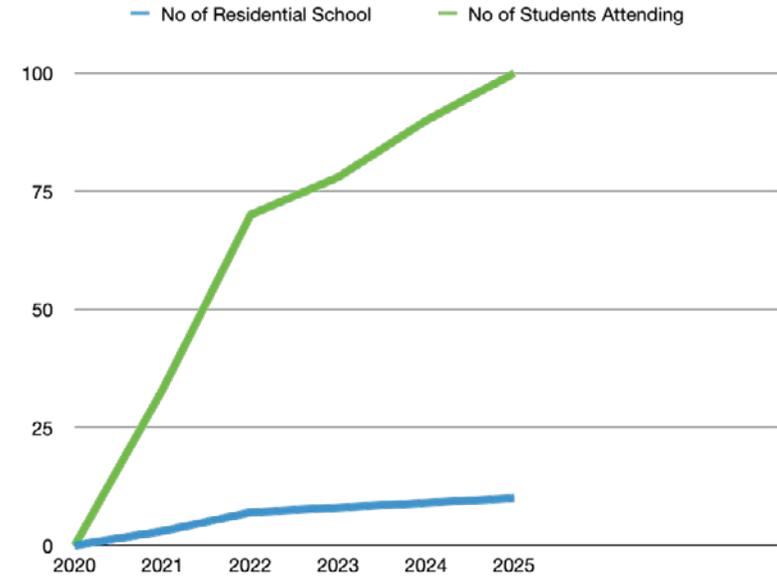
BACHELOR OF NURSING

Nursing Students

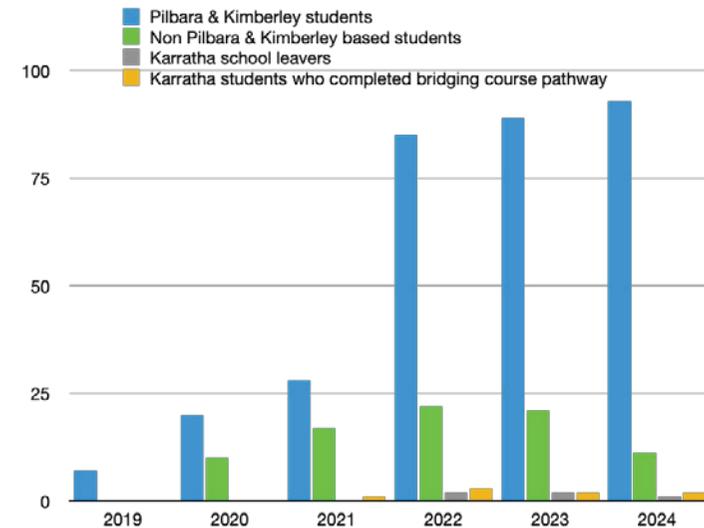
The number of local students pursuing a registered nurse career through the PKUC has grown significantly since late 2019 when the PKUC first began supporting CQUni's Bachelor of Nursing. The PKUC currently support 98 nursing students (several of whom are graduates from Karratha Senior High School and St Lukes' College). The PKUC also supports 21 nursing students currently registered who live outside the Pilbara & Kimberley but have chosen to register with PKUC and receive its support.

Nursing Residential Schools

Since 2021 the PKUC's Karratha based academic staff has delivered face to face nursing residential schools in Port Hedland for local students enrolled in CQUni's Bachelor of Nursing and registered with the PKUC. From 3 residential schools in 2020, the PKUC now delivers up to 10 residential schools annually.



Student from KSHS and St Lukes' College



1 Development of Blended Model for Allied Health Courses for PKUC regionally based students.

Currently it is not possible to study an allied health course (Physiotherapy, OT, Speech Pathology etc) whilst living in Western Australia. This results in Pilbara students having to relocate to Perth to pursue allied health careers. It is possible to pursue an allied health qualification through Charles Darwin University (NT) or Flinders University (SA) and accordingly in early 2024 all the WA Regional University Study Hubs (including the PKUC, Geraldton Universities Centre, Great Southern Universities Centre, Lumen Wheatbelt Universities Centre) lobbied the WA universities to investigate whether they could deliver allied health courses in a blended model format that would allow regional students to pursue allied health qualifications without having to leave their regional homes. Curtin University has agreed to investigate this initiative and currently is working with the WA combined RUSHs to develop suitable courses.

To progress the development of this new blended model of allied health courses there is required financial investment to develop the model, undertake research to ascertain the most suitable delivery model and also write the content for the revised course. The PKUC intends directing funding to the development of this course for it's local students.

2 Development of Programme to Develop and Support Education Students

Teacher shortages are a significant challenge for the Pilbara region. Following consultation with its partner universities the PKUC wishes to augment the current support it provides students and dedicate specific resources to pre-service education students living in the Pilbara. The PKUC also wishes to work with universities to develop education qualifications that are currently unable to be studied whilst living in regional WA.



3 Ongoing scholarship and bursary support for City of Karratha based students

Pilbara based students encounter significant disadvantage when pursuing education qualifications such as social work, nursing and engineering as a result of the direct cost of the course (HECS) and indirect costs such as the requirements to undertake significant unpaid placements and compulsory clinical residential schools in order to obtain the necessary 'practical hours' required to complete the regulatory requirements of their qualification. This is colloquially known as 'placement poverty' where students have to quit jobs, cover additional childcare and pay for transport and accommodation if the placement is in another town. To date, the PKUC has invested significant funds (assisted by the funding from the City of Karratha) to alleviate 'placement poverty', particularly with respect to students pursuing a Bachelor of Nursing. This support has undeniably contributed to the success of the PKUC's support Bachelor of Nursing qualifications.

4 Upgrade of PKUC website

The PKUC does not currently qualify for the CoK 'Take Your Business Online' Grant due to it being a 'non for profit organisation'. The PKUC's website is becoming an increasingly important marketing tool for the PKUC with respect for individual and families moving to Karratha with the PKUC being a key draw card for families moving to the region where family members do not want to give up their university studies. The PKUC is also currently implementing a CMS and this funding would be utilised to integrate the CMS with the existing website.

FUNDING REQUEST FROM THE CITY OF KARRATHA

The PKUC would like to request a 3-year funding agreement from the City of Karratha. The focus will be similar to previous years funding agreements with a specific focus on:

- a. Academic support and course development (specifically nursing education and allied health); and
- b. support of local students to pursue unpaid placements and residential schools to enable them to complete their qualifications and move into the workforce through bursaries and education scholarships;
- c. Upgrade to the PKUC's website and integration of a CRM system.

Area	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total
Course Development (allied health, nursing & education)	\$50,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$100,000
Academic support	\$50,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$200,000
Student scholarships & bursaries	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$60,000
Website development	\$10,000			\$10,000
Total	\$130,000	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$370,000



FUNDING FROM THE CITY OF KARRATHA

Since 2019 the City of Karratha has provided financial sponsorship to the PKUC to assist its establishment and growth. Specifically the funding supported the fitout of the universities centre at the Quarter; the development of supported university programmes and the award of scholarships and bursaries to local students. Of particular note is the support that allowed the growth of the PKUC's supported delivery of CQUni's Bachelor of Nursing programme. Whether it be the support provided to students through nursing bursaries or scholarships, the face to face delivery of nursing residential schools in Port Hedland or

the support of the PKUC's Karratha based nursing co-ordinator, the PKUC's nursing programme has developed an enviable reputation in regional Western Australia. This bodes well for our community which currently relies on a FIFO workforce consisting of agency nurses and other allied health and medical staff in order to operate.

The PKUC's objective is to reduce the reliance on an allied health and medical workforce in the Pilbara, particularly at the region grows in size and workforce operations.

Funds received from CoK	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	Total
Funding Agreement	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$140,000	\$100,000	\$690,000

INVESTMENT RETURN FROM THE PKUC TO THE COK

The CoK is the PKUC's largest creditor. Below is a table of monies paid to the CoK since 2019.

Expenses paid to CoK	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	Total
Rent & Outgoings (The Quarter)	\$79,122.81	\$168,219.30	\$212,494.92	\$218,014.35	\$232,444.62	\$910,296.00
Venue hired (graduation)				\$3,661.14	\$3,847.73	\$7,508.87
Conference sponsorship (OECD)				\$5,000.00		\$5,000.00
National Economic Conference					\$1,450.00	\$1,450.00
Total	\$79,122.81	\$168,219.30	\$212,494.92	\$226,675.49	\$237,742.35	\$924,254.87

IMPORTANCE OF PUC'S CONTINUED OPERATION TO CITY OF KARRATHA

- Karratha campus provides an education support service for current and aspiring students undertaking higher education and other adult learning education within the Pilbara region.
- Ongoing collaboration with local industry to upskill existing workforce locally to meet future needs
- Current and relevant career advice for City of Karratha residents
- Assisting to address nursing skills shortage – nursing students can now work as a nursing assistant upon completion of 50% of their degree. PUC currently has several nursing students working at Yaandina in Roebourne and students working at Karratha Health Campus in conjunction with WACHS.
- Employment pathways within the City of Karratha for students undertaking study and being supported by PUC
- Tertiary study undertaken in Karratha with support provided locally, adds to the ongoing liveability of Karratha. Students studying in Karratha are more likely to use these qualifications in locally based roles they can undertake following completion of their study.
- The ability to commence or continue their university studies is an attraction and retention tool for partners and children looking to move to the Pilbara to accompany their spouse / partner / parent relocating for work purpose.

