2013 Geraldton Institute Inc Annual
From the Chair

From humble beginnings in 2002, to the opening of the Stage 1 Building in 2006, to the completion this year of GUC’s Stage 2 Building, the GUC story is very much one of growth and development, not just for the Centre, but for the Mid West community as a whole.

Throughout this time, over 200 students have graduated through GUC, most serving as nurses and teachers, often taking up hard to fill positions within the Mid West and neighbouring Gascoyne regions.

GUC is not a university but rather partners with universities Australia wide to support the delivery of courses demanded by students, the community and industry. GUC itself is an independent, not for profit, incorporated body overseen by a committed and passionate, community based Board.

As a Board we are proud of the way we have worked with management to confront our many challenges and grasp our opportunities. Amongst some easier ones, we have made some tough calls - but we have always made those calls with one over-riding principle in mind – to provide access to the best possible university courses and learning experiences for our communities and students. That is after all the very reason for GUC’s being!

Much of the progress made to date would not have been possible without the unstinting support of the community, especially the support since its early conception of local government, and the State Government, particularly the Mid West Development Commission. The wider community support is exemplified by the continuation of our membership base and the support given to our Hollomby Foundation.

In recent times, GUC has taken the opportunity to access Royalties for Regions funding to expand our course offerings, enhance the delivery of those courses and services, and to construct our fantastic new Stage 2 facility.

The Stage 2 Building doubles our capacity to cater for the growth in student numbers and courses that we offer. Importantly, this new facility allows us to fulfil the values of the GUC Board, inspired by the demands of our community, to utilise the best of modern online technology, always accompanied by face-to-face tuition. The 150+ students we expect to study with us throughout 2014 is evidence that we are meeting this community demand and we only expect it to grow further as we roll out new programs.

Particularly satisfying is the formal partnership GUC recently entered into with the University of Southern Queensland to enable the supported delivery of nursing to recommence in Semester 2 2014.

Beyond this year a key goal is to support the development of an affordable student accommodation facility within the broader health, education and training precinct. That will enable more students from regional and remote areas beyond Geraldton to access university courses.

I take this opportunity to thank my fellow Board members for their tireless commitment and energies. Of course while the Board has provided invaluable direction, it is left to staff to do the actual heavy lifting! So my sincere thanks goes to all GUC staff led by our incomparable Director, Meredith Wills and very capably supported by Special Projects Manager Natalie Nelmes. I recognise the wonderful commitment of the GUC administration staff and our fantastic academic staff, all working to support our greatest asset, our students.

Steve Douglas
Chair
During this year the GUC has certainly reached a new plateau and, with funds from Royalties for Regions, added five new classrooms to cater for the increased programs and enrolments which we have worked so hard to achieve.

The hard work and dedication of our staff and Board have been the catalyst for change and growth, but this wouldn’t have happened without the active participation and support of the Mid West community and industry.

Take scholarships for example.

While acknowledging the Mid West Development Commission, the City and Greenough Shires’ continual sponsorship since 2002, it’s interesting to note that since 2004 industry has offered generous scholarships to encourage and support local program delivery.

At that time the GUC was struggling to convince our then partners to increase the number of degree programs at the GUC. It was also a time when our community was starting to lose confidence in the GUC being able to deliver everything we set out to do. But since our independence and incorporation in 2010 the GUC has entered into partnerships with universities who share our values of supporting regional students to remain in their own region to study.

But the increase in programs is not just because of our new status but is largely the result of the quite remarkable way in which industry and community has got behind the GUC. And here I am referring to our Industry Working Groups - educators, industry agencies and representatives willing to give time and expertise to help us scope the type of programs that suit our region’s needs. This has often included contributing funds for feasibility studies to present to potential university partners.

We now have business courses, engineering, journalism/communications because industry has never faltered in its goal to upskill existing staff, to train young locals here in Geraldton and to provide career paths while stabilising the regional workforce.

More recently the Mid West Health Education Training Alliance is pooling information on staff expertise, teaching resources and facilities for the central coordination of training across the region, and is making a significant contribution to our new Nursing program.

The number of scholarship sponsors has also grown with the Hollomby Foundation making more than $30,000 available for student scholarships in the last year. We are indebted to the University of Western Australia who has stood by the GUC from the outset, and guided us in the creation of what has become a significant philanthropic body channelling a wide range of regional scholarships.

I am constantly struck by the number of references to the positive impact that GUC staff have had in caring about individual students and their needs. Tamara Haynes, Tiambra Calvin, Sari Jacobsen and Bruce Johnstone all display tremendous commitment, loyalty and generosity of spirit in their roles at the GUC. Ian Johnstone continues to provide his IT expertise and experience far beyond the call of duty. Our program coordinators and support tutors offer a wealth of knowledge and networks to all our students.

I’m of course also indebted to Natalie Nelmnes who has worked so closely with me on new programs and partnerships and has been the driving force behind industry engagement and scholarship developments.

What a great mix: GUC staff, our Board, our tutors, our community and of course our terrific students.

Meredith Wills
Director
Objectives of the GUC

The objectives of the Geraldton Universities Centre are to facilitate, deliver, promote and provide access to university education including:

To serve as the primary point of contact for the delivery of university education in the region.
To facilitate and promote education and career pathways between schools, vocational education and training providers, universities and industry.
To coordinate and support research and partnerships, especially those which assist in the sustainable development of the region.
To advocate in the best interests of regional students.
To promote and assist lifelong learning and raise community aspirations.
To collect public donations to support the Association’s offerings and learning experiences of students.

Board Members & Staffing

Board of Management
Regional Representatives: (elected from Geraldton Institute Inc Membership)
Chair: Steve Douglas – Manager Strategic Projects, Mid West Development Commission
Vice Chair: Grant Woodhams - former Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and Member for Moore
Secretary: Susan Shaw – Principal, Geraldton Grammar School
Treasurer: Bruce McDowell – Partner, Mid Coast Partners

Durack Institute of Technology— Joanne Payne, Director Training
Administering University - Prof Sally Sandover, UWA Academic Director, Educational Strategies Office
Minister for Education – Terry Werner, Director of Higher Education & Legislation, Department of Educational Services.

Staffing
The GUC currently employs:

Director Special Projects
Administration Officer Administration Assistant
Finance Officer Communications Coordinator
Aboriginal Student Support Officer IT Support (contract as required)
Academic Coordinators (5) Sessional Tutors (28)
Supported Program Delivery 2013

The GUC model of supported distance education sees programs offered online by our university partners with face-to-face tutorial support provided by GUC for students across all disciplines. The GUC continues to build on the range of programs available to provide more choice to the local community. In addition to the courses below, GUC has signed an agreement with the University of Southern Queensland to reintroduce a supported Bachelor of Nursing program from semester 2 2014.

Central Queensland University

STEPS
Term 1 Student Numbers: 24  EFTSL: 10.875
Term 2 Student Numbers: 27  EFTSL: 11.75

Bachelor of Accounting/Bachelor of Business
Student Numbers: 20  EFTSL: 15.875

Bachelor of Psychology
Student Numbers: 11  EFTSL: 4.875

Bachelor of Learning Management
Student Numbers: 25  EFTSL: 27.625

Charles Sturt University

Bachelor of Communications (Journalism)
Student Numbers: 15  EFTSL: 11.25

University of Southern Queensland

Associate Degree in Engineering
Student Numbers: 9  EFTSL: 5.5
(includes bridging maths students)

Curtin University

Bachelor of Science (Nursing) - teach out
Student Numbers: 24  EFTSL: 24.625

EFTSL = Equivalent full time student load. Student numbers as at Semester 2 Census.

Graduation

With the restructure of GUC in 2010, the subsequent adoption of new programs and the teach out of pre-existing programs, the GUC did not have students to graduate from the 2013 cohort.
2013 Highlights

GUC appoints Aboriginal Student Support Officer

Courtesy of funding from Royalties for Regions, GUC fulfilled a strategic objective to appoint an Aboriginal Student Support Officer (ASSO) to support all Aboriginal university students, regardless of what institution they are studying with.

There has not been a similar position to this in Geraldton since Edith Cowan University withdrew Kurongkurl Katitjin from Geraldton at the end of 2009.

ASSO Tiambra Calvin is now providing outreach to Aboriginal school students and the wider community to build aspiration for university studies as well as supporting Aboriginal students studying at the GUC. Tiambra’s efforts have seen an increase in Aboriginal students taking up study at GUC with nine students across various disciplines and university partners.

Here Tiambra is pictured with 2013 CQUniversity STEPS students Joyce Capewell and Jared Sibosado and below with students from Geraldton Secondary College’s Follow the Dream program.

Fundraising Breakfast Success

The business community came out in force to support the Hollomby Foundation’s major fundraising event for the year, breakfast with sporting coach and performance strategist Bill Nelson.

Filling Skeetas Restaurant, the event raised $7,000 to help support GUC students.

One of the highlights was the speech from Education students Demi Ahearn and Michael Patrick.

Engineering commences at GUC

GUC commenced supported delivery of the University of Southern Queensland’s Associate Degree in Engineering in 2013.

A small cohort was supported by local engineers from the Geraldton Port Authority, City of Greater Geraldton and private consultancies.

GUC also welcomed the Acting Dean, Prof. Steve Raine to Geraldton during the year.

Right: Four first year students completed an Engineering Practice Skills course run for GUC by the Durack Institute of Technology.
2013 Highlights

Stage 2 Building Complete and officially opened

2013 saw the construction of GUC’s Stage 2 Building. Funded under Royalties for Regions Mid West Investment Plan and built by local builders GBSC, the $3million facility doubles GUC’s capacity to provide face-to-face tuition, in modern, technologically equipped teaching spaces.

The building was officially opened in March 2014 in front of some 90 guests by the Minister for Regional Development, the Hon. Terry Redman.

Supported Nursing back at GUC

After much discussion and negotiation, GUC met the demands of the community, signing an agreement with the University of Southern Queensland for supported external delivery of USQ’s Bachelor of Nursing at GUC from Semester 2 2014.

USQ is currently going through the process of seeking accreditation for Geraldton as a delivery site with the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council.

As part of this accreditation process, GUC hosted a visit from USQ’s Head of Nursing Professor Cath Rogers and Coordinator Dr Clint Moloney, introducing them to the Mid West’s health and education community.

Think Uni? Think GUC was the message in November as GUC invited the community to a range of hands on information evenings to learn more about the courses supported at GUC.
Once again the Hollomby Foundation generously provided thousands of dollars worth of scholarships to assist local students in 2013.

Individuals and the business community also continued to give generously with the GUC acknowledging this support and thanking those listed below.

HOLLOMBY FOUNDATION PARTNERS
Les Hollomby, Ian Wheatland, John & Beryl Rigter, Greenough Lions Club

HOLLOMBY FOUNDATION SUPPORTERS

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