

University impacts on Sunshine Coast region

The University's activities have a ripple effect on the economy and the social/community infrastructure of the Sunshine Coast region.



University of the
Sunshine Coast
Queensland, Australia

Introduction

The Sunshine Coast is one of the fastest-growing regions in Australia and its University has a fundamental commitment to support sustainable regional development across economic, social, cultural and environmental components of our community.



Many people throughout the Sunshine Coast have remarked to me about the University's positive influence on the quality of life in our region.

This publication summarises USC's broadly-based impact on the region—economic impact, social and community impact, and environmental impact—with benefits extending to every part of our core region and beyond.

It is clear from our short history that no other business or industry in the region can compare with the rate of development of this University.

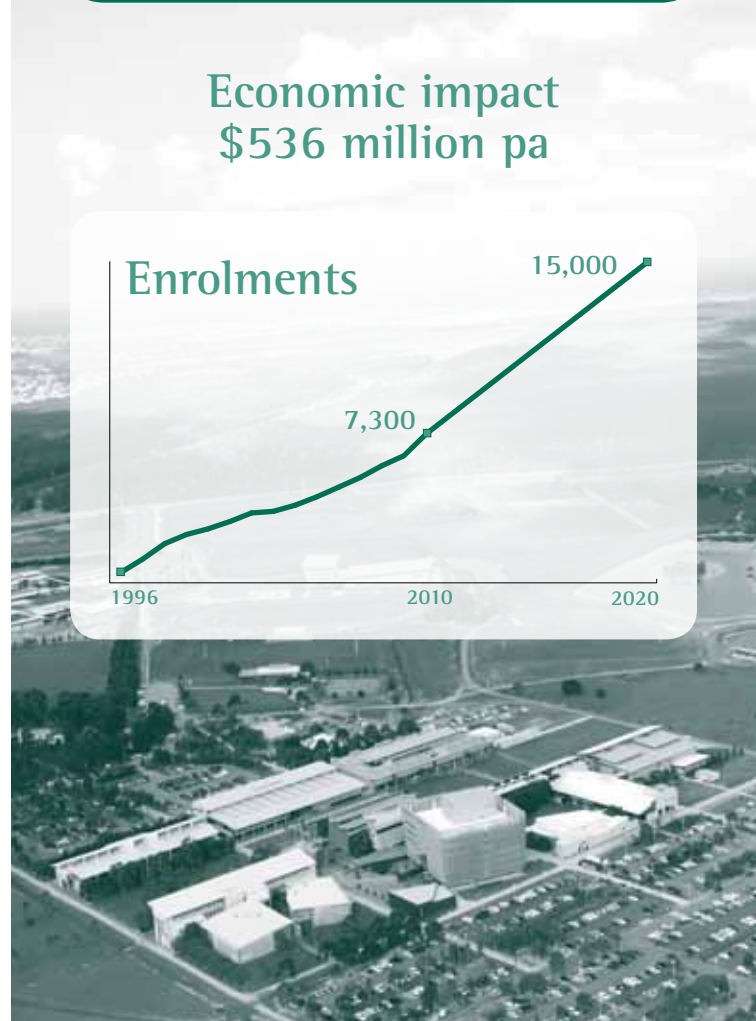
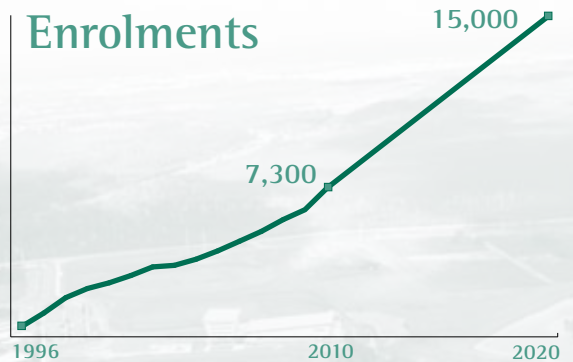
We acknowledge enormous support, over the past 16 years, from governments, businesses, community groups and individuals.

I believe we have demonstrated that such support becomes both an investment in, and an accelerator of, further regional development.

Professor Paul Thomas AM
Vice-Chancellor and President



Economic impact
\$536 million pa



Executive summary

This report outlines USC's key economic, social/community, and environmental impacts on the Sunshine Coast region. Highlights are as follows:

Economic impact

USC's annual contribution to the regional economy is more than \$500M.

Budgeted annual income for 2010 is \$117M, including \$4.5M research income.

Almost 1,200 staff were employed in 2009, with 86 percent residing in the region.

USC is the fastest-growing university in the nation with enrolments reaching 7,300 in 2010.

Enrolments include 875 international students who pay \$14.6M in annual tuition fees. Their living costs, and visits from family members also contribute to the local economy.

With 1,300 new graduates in 2010, USC has produced more than 8,000 professionals for the local and global workforce.

USC's Innovation Centre, established in 2002, has supported the start-up of 55 businesses, creating around 350 jobs.

The University is central to planning for the Sunshine Coast University Hospital and the Sippy Downs Township/Technology Precinct, which together could create 10,000 jobs.

Social and community impact

A wide choice of degrees and research foci are tailored directly to the needs of the region, while teaching quality and staff qualifications score highly in national rankings.

Demand for USC courses in 2010 increased by 24 percent over 2009.

The participation rate in tertiary education for young people in the Sunshine Coast region has more than doubled since the University began in 1996.

Merit and equity scholarships worth \$1.8M were provided in 2010 to support students.

International students from 60 countries enrich the campus learning environment and diversity of the region, and 70 USC students completed part of their degree overseas in 2009.

Student work experience was provided by a record 429 regional employers in 2009.

The Art Gallery staged 10 exhibitions in 2009, attracting 15,360 visitors.

Major community events and seminars are hosted on campus, and community organisation sponsorships totalled \$60,000 in 2009.

Community use of USC sporting facilities represents 80 percent of total usage.

Environmental impact

USC's Sustainability Research Centre was established in 2009, and its director won a prestigious national Eureka science prize for a collaborative project on climate change adaptation.

Collaborative research included a world-leading project on breeding tuna in captivity, accelerated growth in sub-tropical forestry timbers, and the South-East Queensland Climate Adaptation Research Initiative.

Over 14,000 researchers, students and members of the public used USC's Research and Learning Centre on World Heritage-listed Fraser Island.

USC is a leader in sustainability studies, producing Australia's first masters graduates in climate change adaptation.

USC's 15 major buildings have won a total of 33 awards for design and construction, and sustainability. A new \$6M bus interchange on campus has boosted public transport.

World Environment Day (Sunshine Coast), was hosted on campus with 6,500 participants in 2009.

Economic impact

USC and the Sunshine Coast's economy

\$269 million pa spending by USC and its staff, students, alumni



\$536 million pa economic impact

Total economic contribution

The USC community's direct contribution to the regional economy is \$269M a year. With multipliers, spending by USC and its staff, students and graduates generates \$536M per annum in total economic impact.

Economic impact data is presented below as primary expenditure in the region, and with multiplier effects. Economic multipliers are properly applied in impact assessments to capture the ripple effect through the economy of core spending. For example, when the University spends money on a service in the local economy, the supplier spends some of that money on wages and materials, and the supplier's employees spend some of that money on products and services, and so on.

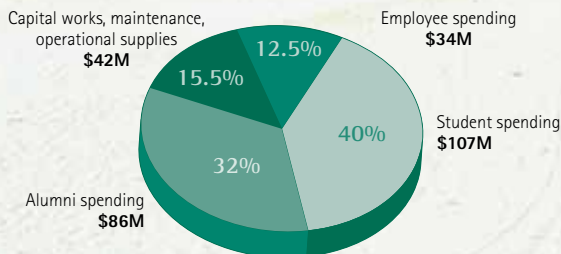
Multipliers used in this assessment for staff, student and alumni spending (+.9 times) and for spending by USC itself (+1.5 times), are conservative and consistent with what other universities in Australia and internationally have used in similar studies.

USC's contribution to the Sunshine Coast economy can be summarised as follows:

	2009 base	2010 est.	2010 with multipliers
USC spend	\$39.3M	\$42M	\$105M (1.5)
Staff spend	\$27.4M	\$34M	\$65M (0.9)
Student spend	\$89.2M	\$107M	\$203M (0.9)
Alumni spend	\$76.6M	\$86M	\$163M (0.9)
TOTAL	\$232.5M	\$269M	\$536M

USC income/expenditure

USC total income in 2010 is estimated at \$117M, up from \$110M in 2009, reflecting continuing growth of the University. This includes research income of \$4.5M, up from \$3.7M in 2009. Australian Government grants account for more than 70 percent of total income. Non-salary expenditure in the region is estimated at \$42M.



Staff spending

USC will spend \$62.5M on salaries (and related costs) in 2010, up from \$55M in 2009. Staff take-home pay of \$39.6M is adjusted for 86 percent of staff residing locally, leaving a figure of \$34M for staff spending before multiplier. The University employed almost 1,200 people in 2009, including full-time, part-time and short-term contracts throughout the year. Full-time equivalent staff is more than 600.

Student spending

USC's 7,300 students will spend \$107M in 2010 in the region, before multiplier. Expenditure by domestic students makes up 84 percent of student expenditure, with international students contributing the balance.

USC's 875 international students contribute significantly to the regional economy. Apart from tuition fees of \$14.7M a year to the University, their "living" expenditure in 2010 is estimated at \$17M. The University's international program promotes the region as a tourist and study destination, and friends and family who visit our international students contribute further to the regional economy.

Alumni spending

By 2010, USC had produced more than 8,000 graduates. The estimated expenditure of those graduates retained in the region was \$86M, before multiplier.

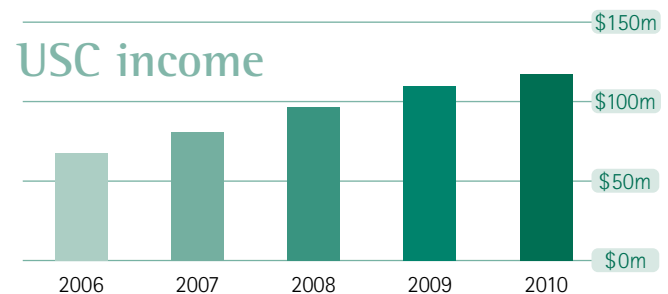
Innovation Centre

USC's Innovation Centre supported the start up and growth of 12 companies, creating around 66 jobs in 2009. The client companies have a high survival rate, and companies raised \$770,000 in industry funding and \$500,000 through grants funding. About 30 USC students worked in the Centre as interns or employees during 2009.

Since its establishment, the Innovation Centre has generated about 350 jobs in the region and supported 55 start-ups.

Hospital and urban village

The University has played a key role in bringing together stakeholders for planning of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital at Kawana, and for the Sippy Downs Township and the Business and Technology Precinct adjacent to the campus. Both of these developments will have a huge impact on job creation in the region. The Sippy Downs "urban village" is tipped to create 8,000 jobs by 2025.



Social and community impact



Degrees reflect region's needs

USC now offers quality undergraduate and postgraduate study across a broad range of disciplines, with 150 academic programs. The expanding degree offerings reflect regional demand, and current and anticipated state, national and international skill shortages. The most sought-after degree is nursing, introduced three years ago in response to a nationwide shortage of qualified nursing graduates. There is also strong demand in other health-related degrees, especially Sport and Exercise Science, Paramedic Science, Psychology and Occupational Therapy. A popular new Bachelor of Education (Primary) was introduced in 2010.

USC degrees are of high quality. In 2009, the University's teaching excellence was rewarded with a record six prestigious Australian Learning and Teaching Council citations, and 5 star ratings for quality teaching and staff qualifications from the Good Universities Guide. USC is in the top quartile of universities in Australia for its proportion of staff with a higher degree.

Demand and enrolments grow

Demand for USC degree courses increased by 24 percent in the year and the University is the fastest growing in the nation, with enrolments reaching 7,300 in 2010. Of these, 76 percent were from within the region, 51 percent were first in family to attend university, 57 percent were mature age, 1.8 percent were of Indigenous origin and 64 percent were female.

Scholarships support students

Merit and equity scholarships worth \$1.8M were awarded to over 600 deserving students. Scholarship funds came from the Commonwealth and from friends of the University.

USC has a key role in meeting the region's development goals in the areas of skills development, knowledge dissemination, and the provision of social and cultural infrastructure.

Increased tertiary education participation

Participation in tertiary education in the Sunshine Coast region by the 15-24 age group has more than doubled since the University began. Access and participation programs include USC's national award-winning Headstart program which allows high school students to study university courses, and Tertiary Participation Pathway studies to help students qualify for university entry.

International students enrich region

USC's 875 international students contribute to the cultural, social and intellectual learning environment on campus, and to the diversity of the region. Students are drawn from about 60 countries, with the top four source countries being Germany, the USA, Canada and France. Friendships forged at university can be life-long and can extend to business relationships.

USC students study overseas

More than 70 USC students studied overseas through the award-winning Global Opportunities (GO) Program. The GO Program allows USC students to undertake study at partner universities overseas while earning credit towards their degree. Top GO destinations in 2009 were the USA, Japan, Germany and Korea. The GO Program won national and state excellence awards in 2009 for promoting internationalisation.

Graduate advantage

Since its inception, USC has produced over 8,000 graduates. In a financial sense, conservative estimates of average earnings advantage for graduates over non-graduates is 40 percent for those with a bachelor degree, and 59 percent for those with a higher degree. University qualifications can lead to a more satisfying career and more productive regional workforce.

Of those seeking employment, 89 percent of USC graduates found full-time jobs shortly after degree completion, with about half remaining on the Sunshine Coast. Overall, 92 percent of graduates were satisfied with their USC experience.



Social and community impact



Student work placements

To support both employers and students in achieving work readiness in graduates, USC offers a range of student placement options titled Work Integrated Learning. In 2009, 429 regional employers provided student placements of various kinds, in some cases leading to full-time employment for the student.

Regional engagement a research focus

In response to the region's needs, USC has three broad research streams—sustainability, regional engagement and health. Within these streams, areas of research strength have been developed in applied genetics in primary industries (specifically forestry and aquaculture), regional sustainability, and the applied health professions including public health, nutrition and dietetics, and nursing. Major projects are outlined under Environmental Impact.

Many smaller projects by staff and students in 2009 benefited the region directly, for example:

- An online computer game, Being Safety Smart, created by a USC academic gives children aged 6–8 strategies to avoid being abducted. The project was funded by the Queensland Police Service and backed by Education Queensland and The Daniel Morcombe Foundation.
- Creative writing students worked on a project with UnderWater World, helping produce the first book on the local attraction.
- Business students developed an international marketing plan for the Smart (fishing) Hook, created by a Sunshine Coast entrepreneur.
- A psychology graduate examined the link between people's knowledge of their predisposition to Type 2 Diabetes and their intentions to lead a healthy lifestyle.
- A tourism and marketing lecturer conducted PhD research into the benefits of sinking HMAS Brisbane off Mooloolaba.

Sporting facilities

Community use of USC sporting facilities represents 80 percent of total usage.

Average community weekly use of USC sporting facilities, including the stadium, fields, athletics track and hard courts, was 2,680 in 2009. In addition, almost 8,000 community members accessed the facilities for events.

Community events and sponsorship

Community events hosted by USC included Voices on the Coast (organised by Immanuel Lutheran College and attracting 4,000 school children), World Environment Day (see overleaf), Tournament of the Minds, and Schools International Language Competition.

Seminars and forums were conducted for the business community, and for the property and development sector. These included the Business Professionals' Forum, the Enterprise Tuesday series, and Understanding Contemporary Property, together with the Sunshine Coast Regional Forum and the State of the Region Summit.

Art Gallery

USC's Art Gallery staged 10 exhibitions in 2009, attracting a record 15,360 visitors. More than 600 community members did volunteer work at the Art Gallery in 2009. The gallery has accumulated a very significant collection of Australian and Indigenous works.



Environmental impact



Sustainability research

The University conducts significant research in this field and many projects have direct relationship to the region.

Sustainability Research Centre: Established in 2009, the Centre has attracted \$3M in research grants, and has about 40 affiliate researchers within and external to USC. Key aspects of the Centre's research include coastal management, climate change, water management, natural and cultural heritage, innovation, adaptive growth, and community well being. The Director of the Centre won the prestigious Australian Museum Eureka Prize, along with his research partners, for work on climate change adaptation.

Tank-bred tuna: USC was part of a research collaboration that won second place in Time Magazine's 50 best inventions of 2009 for the tank-bred tuna project. The project was supported by the Australian Seafood Cooperative Research Centre and coordinated by Clean Seas Tuna Limited.

Forestry growth rates: Joint forestry research by USC, Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries, and CSIRO has resulted in projects worth \$7M in recent years. Projects include enhancing growth rates of sub-tropical timber forests leading to higher carbon sequestration.

South East Queensland Climate Adaptation Research Initiative: USC won \$860,000 in funding to become part of this collaborative study with CSIRO, two Brisbane universities (UQ, GU), and the Australian and Queensland Governments. Researchers are assessing the climate change vulnerability of the region (from Noosa to Coolangatta and west to Toowoomba) and determining how ready the region is for climate change, what strategies are required, and which are the most cost effective.

Other sustainability research projects during the year included surveying endangered quoll numbers, helping to save the *Macadamia Jansenii* species, and water quality studies at Boreen Point and at Fraser Island.

Sustainability is not just a key element of the design of the University's buildings and grounds; it is an area of research and teaching focus. As part of its mission, USC seeks to be an exemplar not only of sustainable campus development but also within the region.

Wildlife Endowment Fund

The Fund will support the ongoing study and monitoring of native wildlife on campus—particularly kangaroos. Studies of the University's kangaroo population conducted during the year found no major change in numbers around campus or in the surrounding areas, despite increased student numbers and visitor activity. Other research found significant evidence of inbreeding in the Eastern Grey kangaroo population.

Fraser Island centre

Over 14,000 researchers, students and members of the public visited USC's Research and Learning Centre on World-Heritage-listed Fraser Island. Areas of research undertaken included the development of strategies for preventing fires, weed management, vehicle impacts on flora and fauna, conservation genetics, reproductive ecology of rare species, and ecotourism.

Sustainability studies

At undergraduate level, most students, irrespective of their discipline, can complete a minor in sustainability. At postgraduate level, USC was the first to offer a masters in climate change adaptation, producing its first graduates in 2009.

World Environment Day (Sunshine Coast)

The event was staged in collaboration with the Sunshine Coast Regional Council and the Sunshine Coast Environment Council, attracting 6,500 participants.

Campus buildings

Since establishment of the campus, USC's 15 major buildings have won 33 awards for design, construction, and sustainability. One-third of USC's capital expenditure for 2009 was allocated to campus sustainability initiatives.

New bus interchange on campus

A \$6M bus interchange was built on campus by Queensland Transport in 2009. The interchange is part of USC's strategy to encourage the use of public transport by staff and students. The interchange agreement also generated additional bus services catering to an estimated 8,400 passengers a week. The 'green link' attached to the interchange reduced travel times by around 10 minutes in peak time and allowed greater pedestrian and cyclist access to the campus from Chancellor Park. Also, urban planning students surveyed cyclists, with the support of the Sunshine Coast Regional Council, to assist with planning of infrastructure for commuter cyclists.





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