



Southern Cross University Regional Engagement Functional Plan 2006 - 2008

Introduction

Southern Cross University (SCU) was established as an independent university in January 1994. It is comprised of regional campuses in Lismore, Coffs Harbour and Tweed/Gold Coast. This substantial regional footprint includes a diverse coastal and hinterland population. SCU holds a significant position in the regional economy. It is committed to its own prosperity as well as that of its partners. By working closely with business, regional agencies, communities, individuals and government at all levels, it makes a meaningful contribution to thinking, planning and management for regional change and growth. The University recognises the complexity of differing values and perspectives that inform the relationships between regional stakeholders. For effective regional engagement to take place a systematic approach to collaboration and leadership is required.

The Regional Engagement Functional Plan is clearly aligned with the University Strategic Plan.

Southern Cross University Vision

Southern Cross University aims to be a dynamic learning community recognized for distinctive achievements in teaching and research and for playing a leading role in supporting regional development with an international presence.

Southern Cross University Regional Engagement Objective

SCU will take a prime role in the intellectual, economic, environmental, social and cultural development of our region. This objective demonstrates SCU's commitment to regional economic prosperity, social and cultural wellbeing and environmental sustainability.

The Functional Plan identifies five key approaches to achieving the objective.

1. **University teaching and learning and research plans** – community engagement is integral to the design and delivery of internationally significant and regionally relevant teaching and learning and research.
2. **The Office of Regional Engagement (ORE)** - The ORE proactively links regional partners to leverage the skills, capacity and networks of both the University and its communities. It facilitates communication and monitors activity.
3. **Partnerships to enhance regional growth** - SCU seeks to recognize the value and importance of two-way interaction between its internal and

external stakeholders. It seeks to provide leadership and support for initiatives across the region that grow the economy, sustain the environment and enhance social wellbeing.

4. **Staff engagement** - All staff will benefit from a systematic regime of reward and incentives for effective engagement activities.
5. **Whole of university campus and location specific strategies** - SCU seeks to develop whole-of university campus and locational focus. By working with key local stakeholders it can satisfy the needs of the community and consolidate its regional position.

The key areas for action in the **Regional Engagement Plan** are:

- RE 1 Regional intellectual environment
- RE 2. Regional economic prosperity
- RE 3. Regional social and cultural well-being
- RE 4. Regional environmental sustainability

Within each area, strategies and targets/performance indicators and internal responsibility are identified. Priorities listed are in order of importance. The Plan will be monitored by the Office of Regional Engagement and reviewed annually by an Advisory group comprised of external and internal stakeholder representatives.

RE 1. Regional intellectual environment

Priorities:

- RE1.1 Integrate regional issues into curriculum design and delivery
- RE1.2 Investigate a specific regionalism planning curriculum initiative
- RE1.3 Appraise and respond to regional research agendas
- RE1.4 Partner other regional education providers
- RE1.5 Contribute to targeted regional workforce up-skilling
- RE1.6 Host public local, national and international speakers series
- RE1.7 Establish a regional data collections warehouse

Priorities	Key Area	Strategy	Target/Performance Indicators
RE1.1	Integrate regional	Engage with regional	Establish and annually monitor MOUs and links with professional agencies

	issues into curriculum design and delivery	stakeholders to inform curriculum development	
RE1.2	Investigate a specific regionalism planning curriculum initiative	Scope the potential for a new post graduate academic program to address expressed nationwide need	Focus on aspects of planning – about moving the thinking from the now to the future in a post-graduate award e.g. Physical planning; Economic and business sector planning; Social and community planning; Environmental planning; Regional administration, and governance; Local government administration, forecasting and planning; Land use development and real estate planning; Planning for climate change; Cultural planning; Seachange planning; Agriculture, tourism and creative industries planning Infrastructure planning; Natural resource planning Health planning; Educational planning; Futures forecasting and planning; Engagement planning.
RE1.3	Appraise and respond to regional research agendas	To increase regional research capacity	Maintain open communication between SCU and regional stakeholders to develop research opportunities; offer guest speakers, invite potential partners onto campuses to see resources; monitor annual income and number of projects
RE1.4	Partner other regional education providers	Lead a regional education forum	Host regular meetings of education providers to seek collaboration, grow capacity and deliver innovative programs and professional development
RE1.5	Contribute to targeted regional workforce up-skilling	Offer short courses and professional development to targeted sectors	Conduct short courses to articulate into academic programs, partner with employers; offer mentoring; special professional events; annually monitor number of courses and participants
RE1.6	Host public local, national and international speakers series	Contribute intellectual stimuli to contemporary issues	Invite public onto campuses for special presentations; partner with regional entities to invest in bringing external speakers; link to teaching areas; annually monitor numbers of events and participants
RE1.7	Establish a regional data collections warehouse	Establish SCU as independent regional data warehouse	Record, grow, consolidate knowledge; provide analysis and interpretation; annually monitor number of items in repository and its use.

RE 2. Regional economic prosperity

Priorities

- RE2.1 Ensure representatives on regional and local economic boards
RE2.2 Sign MOUs with local governments in the region

- RE2.3 Provide research rigour to current regional economic challenges
 RE2.4 Establish advisory networks of key regional leaders to inform research & curriculum development
 RE2.5 Encourage investment in SCU to grow research and academic development
 RE2.6 Provide student engagement opportunities through internships and volunteer placements
 RE2.7 Provide effective communication with regional stakeholders
 RE2.8 Monitor University's annual contribution to regional economy

Priorities	Key area	Strategy	Target/Performance Indicators
RE2.1	Ensure representatives on regional and local economic boards	Encourage SCU membership of regional boards and agencies	Keep staff alert to regional issues to be shared with colleagues; link to teaching & research; link to promotions and recruitment protocols; monitor annual participation levels
RE2.2	Sign MOUs with local government in University footprint	Ensure mutual line of first dealing	Participate in 3 meetings per year with MOU Councils; host some meetings on campuses; monitor collaborations regularly; review annually
RE2.3	Provide research rigour to current regional economic challenges	Link to regional economic agencies to ensure regular updates on ways to respond to local intelligence	Undertake studies, surveys, consultancies to contribute to regional measures of prosperity; have applied research picked up by local agencies; monitor outputs annually
RE2.4	Establish advisory networks of key regional leaders to inform research & curriculum development	Ensure effective communication with sectoral & geographic leaders	Appoint key leaders in targeted communities to adjunct positions in University; invite specialists to Faculty/research advisory committees
RE2.5	Encourage investment in SCU to grow research and academic development	Attract investment from corporate, government and philanthropic sector	Set 5 year targets to ensure Foundation & Research Chairs, Fellowships, Scholarships and Student Life Initiatives
RE2.6	Provide student engagement opportunities through internships and volunteer placements	Ensure business links are nurtured and linked to student accreditation options	Increase numbers of internships, volunteers student involvement; encourage graduate retention in region; develop database of business contacts for development purposes; annually monitor each School's outreach
RE2.7	Provide effective communication with regional stakeholders	Deliver regular and robust external communication with partners; ORE to act as clearing house of internal/external information; to act as solution broker	Distribute monthly ORE update; promote regional engagement through SCU website; links to regional partners; discoverSCU electronic newsletter; regular newspaper columns; share teleconference facilities for regional connectivity
RE2.8	Monitor University's annual contribution to regional economy	Keep record of annual investment by SCU into regional economy	Annual contribution of SCU to regional economy; measure impact of international student spend; SCU sponsorships

RE 3. Regional social and cultural well-being

Priorities

RE3.1	Encourage staff participation in regional social and cultural boards and agencies
RE3.2	Encourage on-campus community cultural and recreational activities
RE3.3	Provide research support into regional creative industries, arts, heritage, recreational agendas
RE3.4	Integrate curriculum design and development in response to regional practice and community interest
RE3.5	Establish advisory networks of key regional leaders to inform research & curriculum development
RE3.6	Encourage local, national and international practitioners to interact with staff and students
RE3.7	Encourage student engagement through active participation in cultural life, internships with community organisations
RE3.8	Encourage regional resource sharing to grow social and cultural capacity

Priorities	Key Area	Strategy	Target/Performance indicators
RE3.1	Encourage staff participation in regional social and cultural boards and agencies	Reward staff engagement and ensure regional intelligence is shared with colleagues	Link curriculum and research to regional partners; link to recruitment and promotion protocols; annually monitor links and outcomes
RE3.2	Encourage on-campus community activities	To host social and cultural events on all campuses	Develop and monitor a portfolio of regular usage; increase number of new events, forums, exhibitions
RE3.3	Provide research support to regional creative industries, arts, heritage, recreational & social services' agendas	Ensure ongoing contact with practitioners; initiate postgraduate research into regional agenda	Increase research projects directed at expressed needs and interests; monitor annually
RE3.4	Integrate curriculum design and development in response to regional practice and community interest	Engage with professional partners to establish priorities	Activate MOUs with key professional agencies; meet regularly and annually monitor links and outputs
RE3.5	Establish advisory networks of key regional leaders to inform research & curriculum development	Establish links with key sectoral, professional organizations, individuals	Appoint leaders to targeted SCU committees; monitor participation and outputs
RE3.6	Encourage local, national and international practitioners to interact with staff and students	Establish links with key sectoral bodies	Monitor regional mentors, experts, guest speakers, field trip hosts, internship supervisors captured in Schools' annual reports
RE3.7	Encourage student engagement through active	Connect student curriculum, research and	Increase opportunities for curriculum or volunteer projects,

	participation in cultural life, internships with community organisations	service opportunities to the social and cultural sectors	sMAD; monitor and count projects; list on ORE website
RE3.8	Encourage regional resource sharing to grow social and cultural capacity	Establish partnerships to share resources with wider community	Evidence of greater resources sharing through co-location, fundraising; annual monitoring

RE 4. Regional environmental sustainability

Priorities

- RE4.1 Support SCU Environmental Working Group across all campuses to world best practice
- RE4.2 Encourage staff participation in regional environmental boards and agencies
- RE4.3 Integrate curriculum design and development in response to regional issues and community interest
- RE4.4 Participate in regional sustainability roundtables with individuals and agencies
- RE4.5 Host a state of the region sustainability conference
- RE4.6 Encourage student engagement with projects, internships, volunteer activity
- RE4.7 Work with regional partners to grow sustainable capacity through research and shared resources
- RE4.8 Establish advisory networks of key regional leaders to inform research & curriculum development

Priorities	Key Area	Strategy	Target/Performance Indicators
RE4.1	Support SCU Environmental Working Group across all campus to world best practice	Employ best practice to ensure all campuses design & deliver environmentally sustainable solutions	Undertake internal projects & external projects with regional partners; monitor investment and completed projects annually
RE4.2	Encourage staff participation in regional environmental boards and agencies	To work with regional agencies to improve biophysical sustainability	Link regional intelligence to teaching and research; reward staff involvement through promotions and recruitment programs
RE4.3	Integrate curriculum design and development in response to regional issues and community interest	Include academic programs that satisfy regional aspirations for global sustainability	Proactive responses for undergrad and postgraduate courses; monitor contact, projects and investment
RE4.4	Participate in regional sustainability roundtables with individuals and agencies	Work with regional agencies and individuals to provide think tanks on regional responses to appropriate sustainability issues – transport, energy, climate change	8 Roundtables in 2006; 4 in 2007 and 2008 in NR and MNC regions
RE4.5	Host a state of the region sustainability	Work with regional and cross-border partners on	Host first conference October 2007

	conference	convening a biennial state of region conference	
RE4.6	Encourage student engagement with projects, internships, volunteer activity	Connect student curriculum, research and service opportunities to the environmental sector	Integrated projects in SESM, sMAD volunteer student program, monitor numbers of projects and participants
RE4.7	Work with regional partners to grow sustainable capacity through research and shared resources	Establish links with key sectoral, professional organizations, individuals and projects to create synergies to satisfy each agenda	Identify key projects annually for staff and student response; investigate collaborative funding options
RE4.8	Establish advisory networks of key regional leaders to inform research & curriculum development	Facilitate connection with regional 'drivers' and incorporate principles into mainstream sector and academic programs	Bring specialists onto campuses; annually monitor links and outcomes