



Children's University Adelaide

2025 Report

Children's University

2025



Driving Change

CU is uniquely positioned to unlock access to a wealth of experiential learning through its partnerships with organisations at every level of the community.

In 2025, 6,443 children participated in activities and bespoke events across metropolitan and regional South Australia, supported by schools, cultural institutions, businesses, libraries, higher education staff, and students. Together, these partners contributed to the success of 241 CU activities, reflecting the power of collaboration and community engagement. From safari park sleepovers to interviews with race teams at Motorsport Park, CU has provided authentic, hands-on learning. Partnerships with Zoos SA, the Science Collective, The Adelaide Festival Centre, Patch Theatre, Adelaide Health Simulation, and the Andy Thomas Space Foundation have brought STEM, creative arts, health, and cultural themes to life, while new agreements with SA Police and regional councils have expanded CU's reach and relevance.

Regional engagement remains a cornerstone of CU's work, with events delivered across 12 regional areas and 58 councils, ensuring children in remote and low-SES communities can access high-quality, culturally meaningful opportunities. Inclusion is embedded at every level through facilitated attendance, discounted tickets and in-kind support.

The impact is clear: over 3,531 students attended 96 CU school holiday events, and more than 4,200 students from 204 schools will soon graduate at 25 ceremonies statewide.

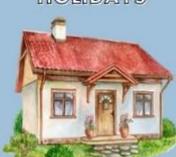
Adelaide University: A New Era for Education and Equity

In 2026, South Australia will enter a new era in higher education with the launch of Adelaide University. Bringing together more than 180 years of combined expertise, this brand new institution unites the strengths of its founding universities to create a place defined by excellence, equity, and innovation. Children's University is proud to be part of this transformation.

As Adelaide University takes shape, Children's University will continue to champion collaboration as the foundation for widening participation. Working alongside schools, industry, cultural and community organisations, and higher education partners, CU is poised to deepen its impact, creating opportunities that ensure the promise of education reaches further and endures for generations to come.

<h3>Community Benefits</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting and Celebrating First Nation Peoples Promotes reconciliation and cultural recognition through inclusive activities Building Community Safety Fosters a sense of belonging and loyalty. Developing Community-Industry Networks Strengthens ties between local businesses and residents. Increasing Career Awareness Educates the community about career paths and local opportunities. Supporting Community Groups Enables clubs and groups to thrive through better access. Bringing Cultural Events to Regions Introduces major cultural experiences to regional areas. Addressing Mental Health Supports resilience and mental well-being initiatives. Developing Leadership Skills Empowers individuals with leadership training and opportunities. Strengthening Through Volunteering Builds strong community organisations via volunteer efforts. 	<h3>Science sparks fun</h3> <p>LIAM WORNALL The Family Day Memorial Hall came alive with excitement on Tuesday, January 23 as about 800 eager visitors gathered to explore the fascinating world of science at the Family Day Science Fair.</p> <p>The school holiday event in Family Day hosted by Science Collective was open for all, with children coming from throughout Eyre Peninsula, including Cleve, Family Day, Carleton Place, Lincoln, Utopia, Port Elliot and Port Adelaide.</p> <p>From the moment they stepped inside the children were immersed in a whirlwind of interactive workshops and captivating displays.</p> <p>Science Collective director Brian Hasky said the day was run in two halves, with three science shows in the morning and three in the afternoon.</p> <p>"There was a wildlife show made possible by Wild on Eyre and then there was a liquid nitrogen show by SciWork," Mr Hasky said.</p> <p>"I gave a fire and both show under my stage name ScifiFire and we had a whole lot of other activities, which were very well received."</p> <p>Science Collective tried to decrease on many items of science as possible, Mr Hasky said.</p> <p>"We had the Marine Discovery Centre show from Family Day in Adelaide," he said.</p> <p>"We had Southern Wine bring some Instagram powered little model cars that went on a race track."</p> <p>"SciWorld also brought along their interactive presentations, so people get an interactive lesson."</p> <p>One of the biggest hits on the day was the virtual reality experience, where children were transported into new worlds through headsets, while Wild on Eyre had a display, with the reptile meeting so popular.</p> <p>Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board brought along environmental displays while there were also activities which delighted the attendees, Mr Hasky said.</p> <p>"The big message we were trying to get across was that science is not boring, it's very accessible and relevant to the real world," he said.</p> <p>In addition to the Family Day Science Collective also hosted a science fair in Whyalla, with about 1000 people in attendance, on Wednesday, January 22.</p> <p>After the event in Family Day and Whyalla, Mr Hasky said everyone had a wonderful time and if they could get sponsorship Science Collective would love to come to more places throughout Eyre Peninsula.</p> <p>"It is such a buzz, seeing children of different ages with minds open and eyes wide open doing stuff, such as putting an electric circuit together or getting really excited at a science show," he said.</p> <p>Children's University was an event space and coordinator for Eyre Peninsula Unions South expressed her enthusiasm for the event.</p> <p>"It's fantastic to see so many children, especially girls, engaging with science at such a young age," she said.</p> <p>"Science and technology are increasingly shaping our future, and it's important that young people, no matter their background, are exposed to these opportunities."</p> <p>"We hope this event sparks a lifelong interest in the sciences."</p> <p>With plans for more free educational experiences in the future, Children's University is excited to continue supporting science engagement across the region.</p> <p>"We are committed to providing all children with access to high-quality educational experiences," Ms Smith said.</p> 
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PORT LINCOLN
FREE ENTRY IN TERM 3 SCHOOL HOLIDAYS



Koppio Smifly Museum



TICKET GIVEAWAY!

Illuminate Adelaide

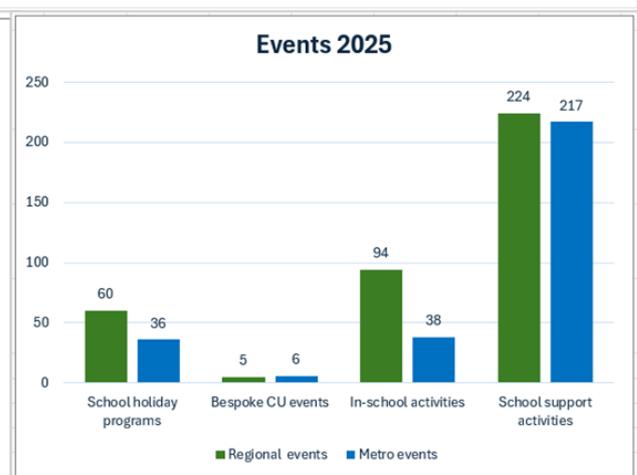
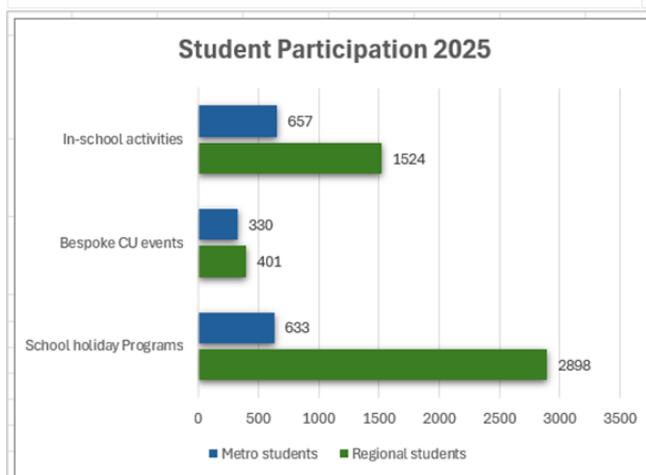
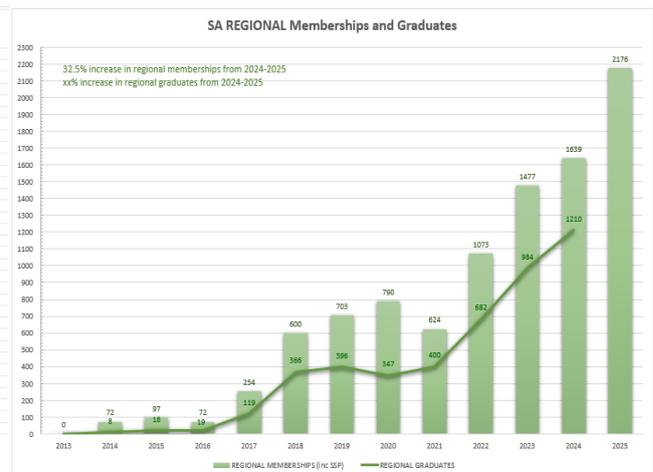
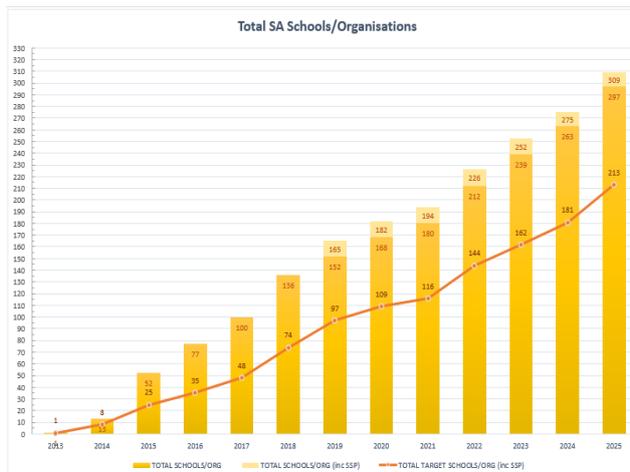
2025 ADMIT ONE FREE





In 2025 Children's University Adelaide

- Supported **5,640 South Australian children** (5-18) across **204 schools**/Learning Hubs and 58 communities.
- Delivered **241 learning activities**: 96 school holiday events, 11 bespoke events and 134 Learning Lunchtime activities. 6,443 students explored and developed new talents.
- Worked with **420 community-based organisations**, businesses and tourist destinations across SA, facilitating access to community group activities and clubs.
- Delivered **441 school support and staff training activities** engaging with 5,603 students and multiple staff.
- 71 students, UoA staff and VIPs provided **volunteering and in-kind** support for program activities and graduations.
- Collaborated with **UoA staff** and students to deliver 42 activities across North Terrace, Roseworthy, Waite, and regional hubs in Mount Gambier, Port Pirie, Whyalla and Port Augusta.
- Supported **92 libraries and community centres**.
- Sponsored 2,168 regional** young people, facilitating access to potential life-changing experiences, skills development, and social mobility outside the classroom.
- Celebrated learning at 13 metro and 12 regional graduation ceremonies across South Australia.
- Supported **10 University partners and the AfrAsia Foundation** in delivering the CU program across NSW, TAS, WA, NT, VIC, New Zealand and Mauritius, widening participation in equitable educational activities for 12,872 students at 472 schools.



Since launching in 2013, Children's University has supported **83,908 young people** in partnership with the University of Newcastle; Swinburne University of Technology; Charles Darwin University; the University of Western Australia; Edith Cowan University; the University of Tasmania (Australia); and Lincoln University; the University of Canterbury; Massey University (New Zealand) and the AfrAsia Foundation (Mauritius).

Learning Destinations: Opening Doors to Discovery

In 2025, Children’s University partnered with 420 Learning Destinations, each welcoming children to discover, create, and learn beyond the boundaries of the classroom. A Learning Destination can be almost any organisation that offers enriching educational experiences. The variety is truly impressive, ranging from museums and farms to community theatres, libraries, and local festivals.

CU’s partnerships are not limited to large institutions. 92 local libraries offer activities during school holidays, while some destinations, like the Royal Adelaide Show, host annual events with bespoke CU activities included. In regional areas, CU works with local businesses and councils to encourage children and families to explore their own communities. For Learning Destinations without on-site staff, CU co-creates downloadable activity sheets, enabling children to earn stamps at over 50 national parks, conservation reserves, and National Trust properties.

The range of activities is as broad as the organisations themselves. Children have taken the helm aboard the One and All sailing ship, woven baskets with Marra Dreaming, tried beachcombing with marine scientists, and created mini movies at Yankalilla Library.

The voices of Learning Destination partners highlight the collaborative impact.

- Community Engagement**
“80% of the 40 odd attendees were CU families which is amazing!” Alex Emmins, National Trust on Tree Planting at Z-Ward
- Inclusivity and Participation**
“We have seen an increase in numbers of participants at some of our activities as well as children being provided with a variety of educational experiences they may not usually partake in.” Renmark Paringa Council
- Growth and Innovation**
“Children’s University has helped our workshops program grow from a business I ran myself to the team of 4 you see in that image in just a few years.” CEO, GooRoo Animation
- Cultural and Educational Enrichment**
“The partnership has not only enhanced the educational experience for children but has also contributed to the cultural and historical appreciation of Murray Bridge.” Rural City of Murray Bridge

In 2025, CU members participated in more than 271,000 hours of learning, proving learning knows no bounds when doors are open and curiosity is encouraged.

“Children’s University has brought us to places where we learned and discover history, science and arts as a family. As migrants, it is not only our son who is learning but it is also an eye-opener for us as parents to discover about Australia’s history and culture. The activities and learning destinations sparked interest and curiosity in our son. The CU learning destinations were family activities that fostered healthy and positive relationships.” Parent, 2025



Standing with Regional Communities

Children's University has significantly broadened its educational footprint across regional SA.



During the last 12 months, CU worked with 92 regional schools across the Eyre Peninsula, Spencer Gulf, Limestone Coast, Yorke Peninsula, Kangaroo Island,

Murraylands/Riverland, Barossa/Clare and the Fleurieu Peninsula. 24 schools joined the program for the first time, resulting in a 33% increase in regional student participation.

STEM: Committed to promoting science and technology in regional communities, CU supported **Science Fairs** in both Tumby Bay and Whyalla, in a collaboration with Dr Brian Haddy and the Science Collective. These events attracted more than 1,500 students and featured a diverse array of interactive workshops delivered by organisations such as Ignite VR, the Marine Discovery Centre, SciWorld, and Star Lab. In Naracoorte and Mount Gambier, CU again supported Nitro Nat in delivering a show of explosive colour and crazy chemical reactions that filled enquiring minds with the wonders of science.



ARTS: In May, CU helped bring the magic of theatre to Port Pirie by supporting Patch Theatre's GLOW & TELL as part of the **Dream BIG Children's Festival**. All four performances sold out, drawing children from across the Spencer Gulf to experience dynamic, light-filled storytelling in a custom-built UV tent. For many, it was their first live performance, making the event especially memorable. This award-winning collaboration with **the Adelaide Festival Centre and Port Pirie Library** marks the third such event, cementing CU's commitment to cultural experiences that spark imagination and connection.

HEALTH and WELLBEING: In 2025, CU expanded its regional engagement by partnering with the **Adelaide Rural Clinical School and UniSA in Mount Gambier** to deliver inspiring health-focused presentations to regional schools

and higher education hubs. Fifth-year medical students shared their educational journeys and insights into careers in medicine, encouraging students to pursue their aspirations and ask questions about health and wellbeing.



COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS: CU broadened its collaboration with regional sponsor, Bendigo Community Bank Port Lincoln, to deliver a free **Community Day** where children rugged up to enjoy orienteering, treasure hunts, basket weaving, and nature talks. The orienteering course at Brinkworth Reserve proved especially popular, and while hundreds attended, the sense of community and discovery was the true highlight, reflecting CU's commitment to making enriching experiences accessible for more children across regional SA.

CULTURE AND PEOPLE: A continuing partnership with Wirangu Elder Susan Betts supported the delivery of a unique First Nations learning experience for students in the Eyre Peninsula. Grounded in the organic shapes found in nature and on Country, the session deepened cultural understanding and respect by exploring the spiritual significance of these forms. CU also joined forces with the Port Lincoln Multicultural Council to deliver **Global Fest 2025**, featuring a vibrant Kids Zone that attracted over 400 children and families from across the Yorke Peninsula. An array of interactive CU activities provided young participants with an engaging opportunity to celebrate Port Lincoln's rich cultural diversity and discover traditions from around the world in an inclusive and welcoming environment.

SPORT: On 12 September, 129 CU members from four regional schools across the Murraylands attended an exciting Supercars event at Shell V-Power Motorsport Park, The Bend. The day began with a welcome from CEO Alistair MacDonald, who shared insights into the event's scale, involving around 600 personnel. Students enjoyed a guided "Garage Tour," learning about race car technology and driver conditions. They also participated in a Junior Press Conference, asking thoughtful questions of race team representatives. Between sessions, children explored the venue, watched cars on the track, collected merchandise, and played lawn games, making it a memorable and educational experience.



NATURE & ENVIRONMENT: CU collaborated with **Zoos SA** to support 30 school students and staff from regional Wallaroo Primary School to attend a bespoke overnight experience at Monarto Safari Park. Students were given the unique opportunity to work closely with safari park staff to learn more about the diverse range of expertise required to manage such a large organisation, and the paths different team members have taken throughout their careers. The event included a Safari Tour and overnight ZooSnooze.

Higher Education

- 45 EVENTS
- 645 CHILDREN

Broadening Engagement with Higher Education

In 2025, CU has woven a remarkable story of opportunity and equity for young people in our regional communities. Facilitated by university academics and student volunteers, experiential workshops brought the rigour and excitement of university life into communities as far away as Mount Gambier. With 645 young people taking part in 45 separate activities on campuses across North Terrace, Waite, Roseworthy, Whyalla, Port Augusta, Port Pirie and Mount Gambier, the impact is significant. For many, it was their first time inside a lecture theatre or asking a scientist a question. And for some, it was the first time they'd ever imagined themselves in higher education at all.

A new partnership with Uni Hub Spencer Gulf saw young people take part in campus-based learning while their parents explored adult entry pathways, an approach that brings families on the learning journey together. In Whyalla, CU partnered with The Adelaide Rural Clinical School to bring fifth-year medical students into classrooms, where they shared their educational journeys, fielded questions about the human body, and showed that university is a place where curiosity thrives and perseverance pays off. Meanwhile, in Mount Gambier, CU is working with UniSA to give children hands-on exposure to nursing and midwifery careers. Through practical workshops, dressing wounds, applying slings, and practising hand hygiene, students experienced what it's like to learn alongside professionals.

“This is the first time we’ve stepped on campus here at Uni SA and we’ve been twice this week for CU activities.”

Parent

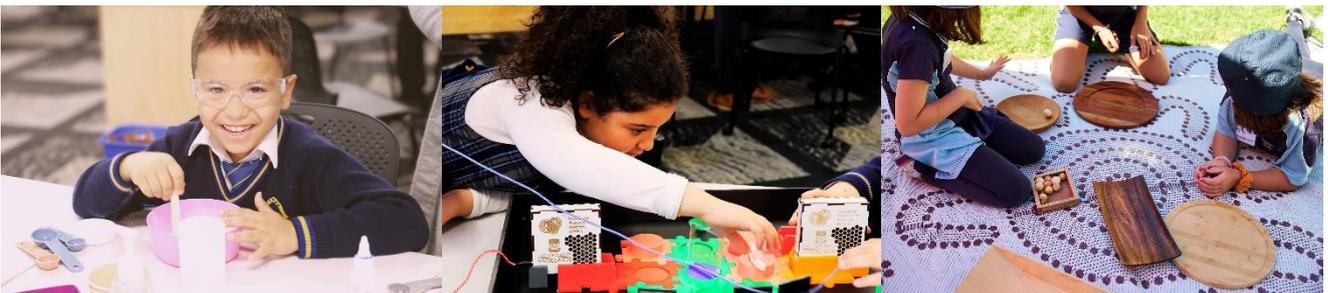
The CU School Holiday programme has offered multiple opportunities to visit metropolitan campuses at Waite, Roseworthy and North Terrace. In the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, students gained an understanding of body systems, learning not only how bones, muscles, and organs work together but also what happens when systems fail. This hands-on approach demystifies complex scientific ideas and gives students a tangible sense of what studying health sciences entails.

More than 150 students from six schools participated in CU's annual **On-Campus Experience Day**. Guided by academics and Higher Degree Research (HDR) students from across disciplines, children explored concepts in science, technology, finance, and the arts. Laser experiments demonstrated principles of light and energy, while finance simulations in the Market Labs introduced students to economic decision-making and critical thinking. These sessions were designed to nurture problem-solving skills and encourage analytical thinking, skills essential for success in any academic field.

CU also leveraged the expertise of HDR students to deliver research-inspired activities. Children extracted strawberry DNA, explored sustainability by designing eco-friendly schools, and investigated how mathematics influences social media behaviour. These experiences provide early exposure to research methodologies and demonstrate the relevance of academic disciplines to real-world challenges.

Feedback from participants underscores the transformative impact of these initiatives. As one educator noted, *“Before the experience, a student wanted to be a police officer. Now they’re thinking about a career in finance.”*

60.7% of surveyed children now talk about going to university, and independent evaluations show an 80% increase in higher education aspirations among participants. During the recent On-campus Experience Day, one student shared, “I’m definitely coming here (University) when I leave school”, while a parent from St Mary Magdalene’s School noted, “Many of our kids don’t even have university on their radar but now after spending the day on campus, many of them are excited at the prospect and that is truly incredible.”



“It’s amazing that the students get to see that what they learn in school and what they’re doing here is what people studying at university do too. The students get to connect their learning from school to the real world.”

Vicki Warrick, Wellbeing Leader, Salisbury North.

Careers and Future Industry

Children’s University continues to work towards broadening career horizons for young people, particularly those from regional and marginalised communities. Through thoughtfully designed events and partnerships, CU brings children into direct contact with professionals and organisations across a diverse range of industries, fostering aspirations, awareness, and a practical understanding of future career pathways.

Immersive Industry Experiences

Career Day at the Zoo

In April, CU partnered with Zoos SA to deliver a pilot Careers Day at Adelaide Zoo offering primary school students a unique, behind-the-scenes look at the breadth of roles within a major organisation. Students engaged with professionals including retail managers, zookeepers, tourism managers, conservation managers, and public relations staff. Each interaction was paired with a work-experience style activity, allowing children to gain hands-on insight into the daily realities and skillsets required in these varied careers. This initiative introduces children to the world of work, highlighting the diverse expertise needed to run a large, complex organisation.

Lot Fourteen Innovation District

CU’s long term collaboration with Renewal SA’s Work Program enabled students to visit Lot Fourteen, Adelaide’s flagship innovation precinct. Here, children learned about the site’s transformation and future vision from industry leaders, before participating in a coding workshop delivered by Learn With Bricks. The experience culminated in a private tour of the Australian Space Discovery Centre, where students explored cutting-edge technologies and the possibilities of space careers. These activities provided tangible links between classroom learning, digital skills, and the rapidly evolving world of technology and innovation.

Space Passport Forum

A highlight of the year was CU’s involvement in the **18th Australian Space Industry Forum**, facilitated by the Andy Thomas Space Foundation. Through the Space Passport Program, 60 students gained exclusive access to the Australian Space Forum Exhibition Hall, meeting leaders from the space sector and engaging in conversations about current and future careers. The passport initiative encouraged children to ask questions, learn about educational pathways, and have their passports stamped by exhibiting companies. This direct engagement with industry professionals and exposure to emerging technologies inspired participants to consider careers in space and STEM fields, while also providing practical information about how to pursue these pathways.



Building Skills and Confidence

CU’s approach is grounded in experiential learning. By facilitating real-world interactions with professionals and organisations, CU helps children develop essential skills; communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and digital literacy, while building confidence in their ability to navigate future academic and career environments. Whether through coding workshops, hands-on science activities, or industry Q&A sessions, students are encouraged to believe in their own potential to create, innovate, and make a meaningful difference in the world around them.

Thank you to all our Learning Destinations, funders, partners, and supporters for making this year’s achievements possible; together, we look forward to inspiring even more young minds in 2026.

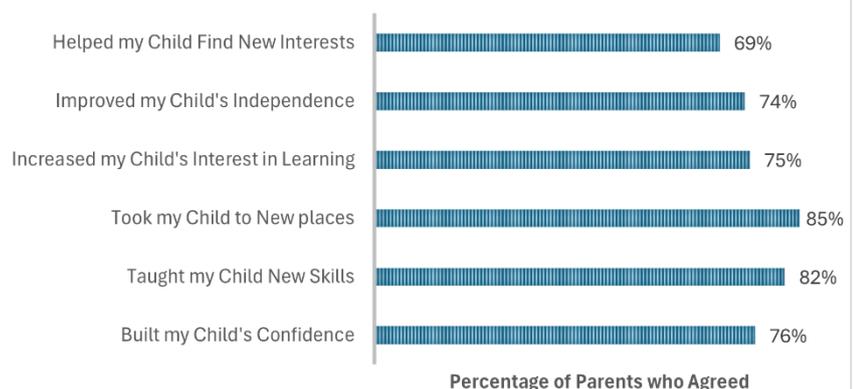
CU has given my son more confidence to ask for more learning activities and regularly talks about going to university and learning science-based things due to the excursion he attended at the University of Adelaide.

Parent 2025

CU has broadened my child’s understanding of the career opportunities available and allowed my child to consider careers that would otherwise not have been considered.

Parent 2025

CHILDREN'S UNIVERSITY



Children's University Online Parent Survey 2025