



Charles Sturt
University

Student Services and Amenities Fee
2019 Financial Report





Introduction

This report is a financial summary of 2019 Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) funded activities to complete the existing 2019 Annual Report and finalise reporting. Moving forward the SSAF Team will provide a comprehensive annual report which incorporates a financial acquittal for 2020 and future years.

Chair Report

As Chair of the Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) Steering Committee, I am pleased to present the 2019 SSAF Financial Report. This report compliments the 2019 SSAF Annual Report and provides a summary of the 2019 SSAF income and expenditure, along with a detailed view of how and where the financial contribution made by students was allocated across Charles Sturt University's 5 key project areas.

The Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) contributes towards the funding for student services, support and facilities of a non-academic nature and of benefit to students. At Charles Sturt SSAF funding has supported the improvement of the technology students engage with (for example the student portal), the on campus facilities, a range of student services, and key student experience projects that are put forward by staff and students.

All projects require endorsement from the Student Representative Committee. The process is overseen by the SSAF Steering Committee, ensuring that funding is spent in accordance with legislation. More importantly, this Committee ensures that each and every initiative and project funded by this program is designed to enhance the student experience at Charles Sturt University, represent the student allocation priorities identified via the SSAF Student Survey and the University-wide student-centred strategic priorities .

This report includes a variety of Case Studies demonstrating the scale of projects undertaken in 2019 and representing a cross section of allocation areas.

If you have any queries about SSAF please refer to information found on the Finances tab on the Student Portal or email ssaf@csu.edu.au.

Kind regards,



Jacqueline Clements
Executive Director, Student Services



Background

The Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) helps provide funding for non-academic student services, support and facilities. Since 2012, this compulsory fee has allowed Charles Sturt to enhance the range and quality of support services available to both on campus and online students, helping to improve and enrich student life.

In the Higher Education Legislation Amendment (Student Services and Amenities) Act 2011, the Commonwealth Government identified these 19 areas in which SSAF can be spent.

Legislated areas for SSAF expenditure

1. Providing food or drink to students on a campus of the higher education provider
2. Supporting a sporting or other recreational activity by students
3. Supporting the administration of a club, most of whose members are students
4. Caring for children of students
5. Providing legal services to students
6. Promoting the health or welfare of students
7. Helping students secure accommodation
8. Helping students obtain employment or advice on careers
9. Helping students with their financial affairs
10. Helping students obtain insurance against personal accidents
11. Supporting debating by students
12. Providing libraries and reading rooms (other than those provided for academic purposes) for students
13. Supporting an artistic activity by students
14. Supporting the production and dissemination to students of media whose content is provided by students
15. Helping students develop skills for study, by means other than undertaking courses of study in which they are enrolled
16. Advising on matters arising under the higher education provider's rules (however describe)
17. Advocating students' interests in matters arising under the higher education provider's rules (however described)
18. Giving students information to help them in their orientation
19. Helping meet the specific needs of overseas students relating to their welfare, accommodation and employment.

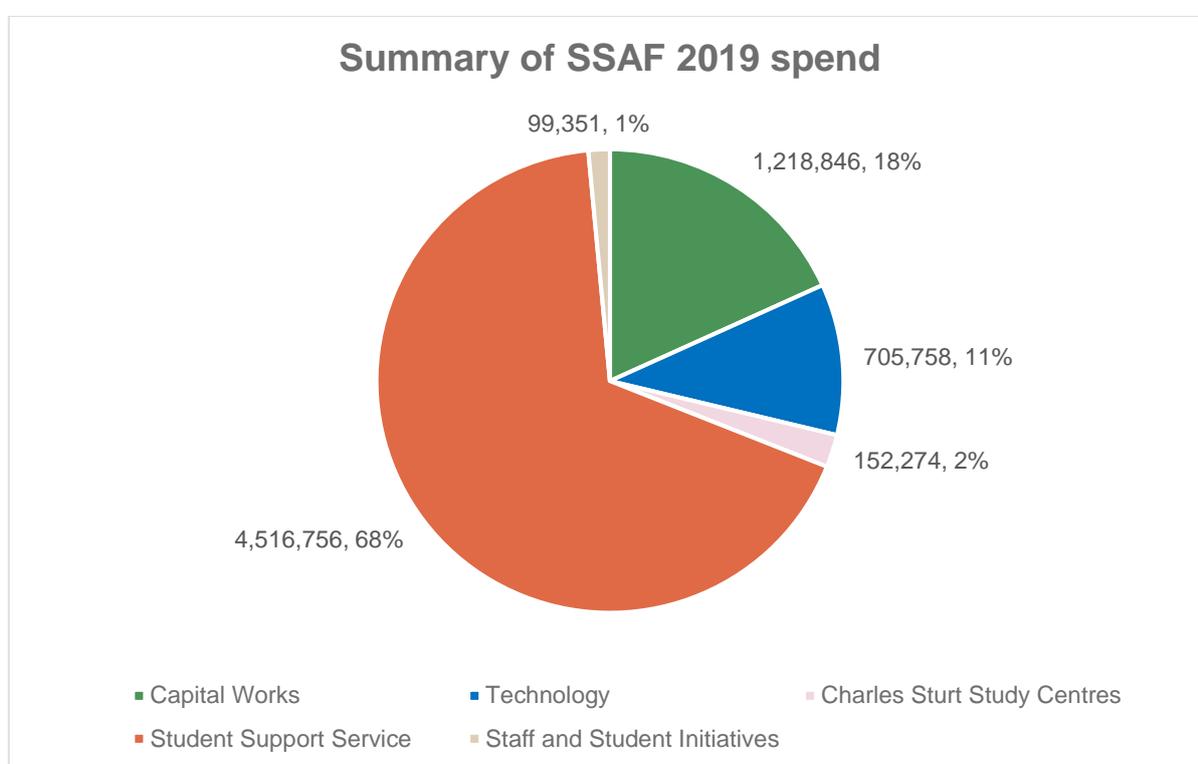
In 2019 students paid SSAF for each subject they were enrolled in at Charles Sturt. The fee was \$37 per eight point subject, up to a maximum of \$296 that year. This is a compulsory fee and most Charles Sturt students are required to pay, although there are some exemptions. Students may choose to pay the fee upfront, or defer it under the SA-HELP scheme, which is similar to the schemes available to defer their tuition.

For more information about who is eligible to pay the SSAF and how to pay or defer, visit:
www.csu.edu.au/courses/fees-and-costs/student-services-and-amenities-fee

Summary of 2019 Income and Expenditure

Summary	2019 Total Allocation	Actual Spend	Variance
Technology	984,573	705,758	278,814
Capital Works	3,605,429	1,218,846	2,386,583
Charles Sturt Study Centres	186,440	152,274	34,166
Student Support Services	4,727,864	4,516,756	211,108
Student Initiatives & Staff Submissions	205,698	99,351	106,347
	9,710,004	6,692,986	3,017,018

SSAF Income	6,061,915
Allocated Carried Forward Funds	3,648,088
	9,710,004



SSAF funding is allocated across a large number of projects which can be displayed through five key areas as indicated on the summaries above. These are:

1. Technology
2. Capital Works
3. Charles Sturt Study Centres
4. Student Support Services
5. Student Initiatives & Staff Submissions

These areas are detailed below and include a summary of the projects and expenditure. Case Studies attached at the end of this report showcase project variety where appropriate.

The following stakeholders have their own committee process in recommending the allocation of SSAF to projects which are endorsed by the SSAF Steering Committee:

- Division of Information Technology (DIT) – Technology Governance Committee
- Division of Facilities Management (DFM) – Capital Planning Committee
- Study Group Australia – The Charles Sturt University Study Centres SSAF Committee.

Below are the detailed 2019 SSAF Allocation of funds.

Technology 2019 SSAF Allocation

Extended IT Support for Students, Personalising Timetables, Student Portal	645,758
Lynda.com for Students	60,000
Total Technology 2019 SSAF funding	705,758

Capital Works 2019 SSAF Allocation

Bathurst – John Oxley Village Trudy's Commons Refurbishment, Eco Walk, Rafters Atrium Refresh	309,440
Wagga Wagga – Beres Ellwood BBQ Shelter, Walking Loop, Pool Cover and Shading, Livestock Fitting Facility, Recreation Centre	478,125
Dubbo – Courtyard Refresh	36,627
Thurgoona – Building 672 Common Room Refresh, Outdoor Bouldering Wall	236,595
Orange – Spring Creek Village Open. Roof, Girinyalanha BBQ and Shelter	113,576
Canberra – Building 3018 St Marks Library Upgrade	44,483
Total 2019 SSAF Campus Facilities Projects	1,218,846

Due to timelines of planning through to construction for facilities and infrastructure along with external contract arrangements, projects for Capital Works and Information Technology infrastructure often carry over into the next financial year for completion. This requires a carry-over of funds from one year until the next, until projects are completed. In 2019 the allocation for Capital Works excluding carry-over was \$1,000,000 and for Information Technology it was \$400,000.

Study Centres 2019 SSAF Allocation

Careers	39,883
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	25,882
Orientation	30,594
Student Experience Events	55,915
SG -SSAF-Study Group Allocation	152,274

Each year, Study Group Australia are allocated a SSAF budget based on a student load formula approved by the SSAF Steering Committee. This allocation is distributed between the three Charles Sturt Study Centres in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. Any funds not expended in that financial year are recouped by Charles Sturt University and returned back into the SSAF surplus.

Student Support Services 2019 SSAF Allocation

Elite Athlete and Sports	321,864
Sporting Facilities North and South	417,937
Policing Amenities Caps & Bags, Mobility Packs	76,177
Student Leadership Program and Luminosity Conference	168,458
Orientation and Welcome Packs	359,796
Student Communications	356,245
DLS – Return Postage	229,436
Food & Beverage Discount	200,000
Careers and Interview Stream	227,201
Student Counselling, Financial Student Support, Health and Promotions, Training and Initiatives, Playing Right, CSU Ally Program, Blow Me First	863,575
Student Liaison Officers, Events, SSAF Administration, External Scholarships	1,023,678
Bus for Distance Education Students, Residential School Events	50,821
International Liaison Officers, International Consultation Group, International Events, International Welcome Packs, International Student Loans Scheme	221,568
Total Student Support Services 2019 SSAF Allocation	4,516,756

SSAF has been used to fund a range of staff roles that benefit online and on campus students. Many student services are available online or via telephone or Skype, so online students can also benefit from wherever they may be studying. Improvements to the Student Portal, and the development of student media such as the Charlie blog are available to all students. Residential school events, transfers to campus for students travelling to residential schools, return postage of library books, Counselling, financial and career support are just some examples of projects designed specifically for online students using SSAF funds.

Student Initiatives & Staff Submissions 2019 SSAF Allocation

Harmony Day	8,473
Student Writing Night	236
Student & Alumni Evening	1,902
APA Style Central	10,040
Pocket Maps	6,600
Emergency Accommodation Initiative	5,366
On Campus Transport	1,455
Study Stays 2017	7,850
Wagga Wagga FoodREDi Program, Approaching Ag Careers Fair, SAVS BBQ	1,194
Port Macquarie campus, Double Pole Star Shade, Hire Outdoor Cinema, Wednesday Lunches, Club Funding, Yoga & Meditation, Metamorphosis	16,023
Orange campus Clubs Printer and Yoga	3,636
Sport costs for SRC club	21,434
Actors Showcase	4,622
LinkedIn Photo Booth	9,175
Connecting to local Ind	1,346
Total Student Initiatives 2019 SSAF Allocation	99,351

Student and Staff Rounds for 2019 SSAF Projects

Each year, Charles Sturt calls for submissions from students and staff for projects that improve the student experience. The wide range of SSAF projects benefits different cohorts of students, such as on-campus, online and international students.

Proposals need to address student need and are developed collaboratively with Divisions and Faculties across Charles Sturt to ensure a “whole of University” approach. Each proposal requires endorsement from Student Representative Council (SRC) before being considered for funding.

The SSAF Steering Committee reviewed all submissions against government requirements and funded student-centred projects and initiatives that best align with student needs, existing programs and Charles Sturt strategies.

Each year a sample of students are asked to complete an annual online student survey. The survey asks students to rank the 19 government legislated areas criteria in order of their preference for future spending. This helped guide priorities for 2019 SSAF spending.

At any time of year, students can also have their say via Student Representative Councils, Student Liaison Officers or direct to the Division of Student Services via email to ssaf@csu.edu.au.

More information can be found online at <http://student.csu.edu.au/finances/current-year-fees-and-charges/ssaf>

Case Studies for 2019 SSAF Projects

Case Study 1

Project: Student Portal
Who benefits: All Charles Sturt University students
Area (of CSU): Division of Information Technology
Expenditure: \$353,000

Legislated SSAF spending areas:

- Promoting the health or welfare of students
 - Helping students obtain employment or advice on careers
 - Helping students with their financial affairs
 - Helping students develop skills for study, by means other than undertaking courses of study in which they are enrolled
 - Giving students information to help them in their orientation
 - Helping meet the specific needs of overseas students relating to their welfare, accommodation and employment
-

As the centre point of student information, the Student Portal provides a personalised experience giving students the right information when and how they need it.

During 2019, The Student Portal 2019 project delivered a major redesign of the portal. The new portal is a significant improvement, encompassing new content and services nurturing students throughout their journey.

The Student Portal 2019 delivered:

- best practise user experience
- significantly improved content including brand and tone of voice
- improved navigation
- increased personalisation – content is unique and relevant to each student
- improved student web journey by increasing integration with other web applications
- a new current student public facing site, increasing visibility of the quality information and services Charles Sturt provides to students.

How we delivered it

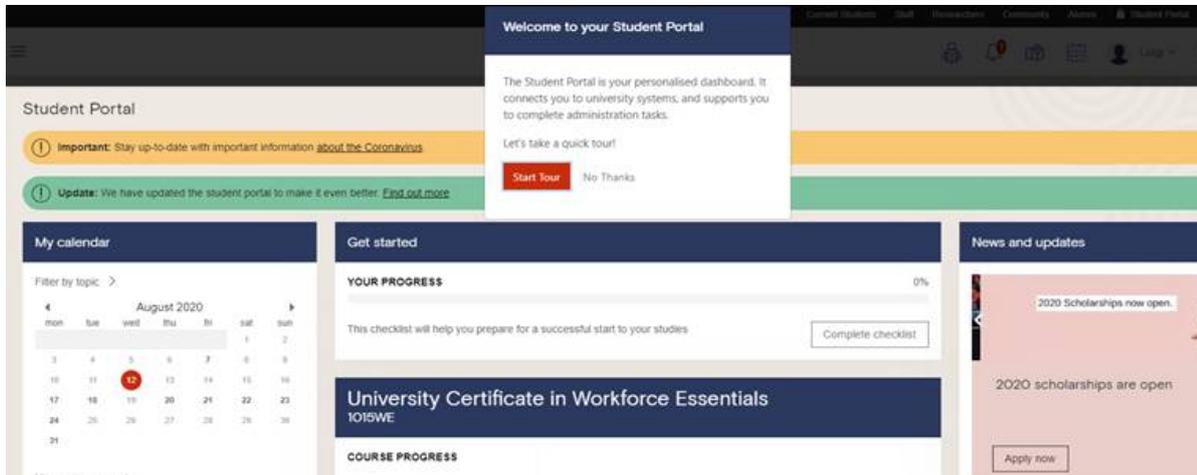
We asked students for their feedback regarding the existing portal, and we analysed over two years of feedback to determine pain point trends. We also reviewed over 30 competitor portals and engaged a consultant to run user testing before going live.

Students asked for improvements to user experience and navigation, personalisation, interactive checklists to track progress, and to be told everything they need to do upfront.

Based on this feedback, we added several innovative features, including:

- first time users are greeted and offered a tour of key features
- interactive calendars including key dates, subjects and exams
- personalised emergency notifications

- general notifications
- checklists for 'getting started' and 'next session'
- a publicly accessible site which provides the opportunity for prospective students and student influencers to find out what it means to be a student at Charles Sturt.



View of the Student Portal for first time users

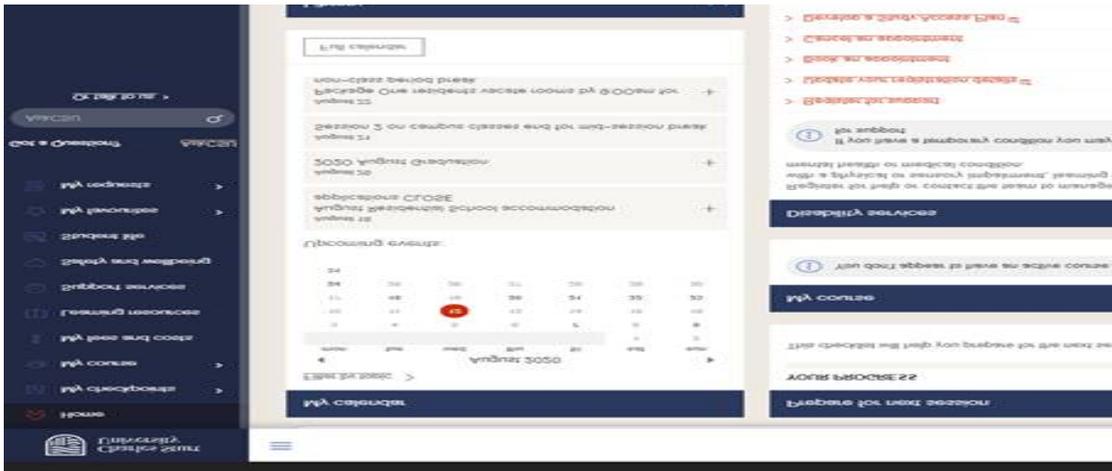
A new on boarding experience for new students

At the end of 2019 we launched a new on boarding experience. We're pleased to share new on boarding portal features, including:

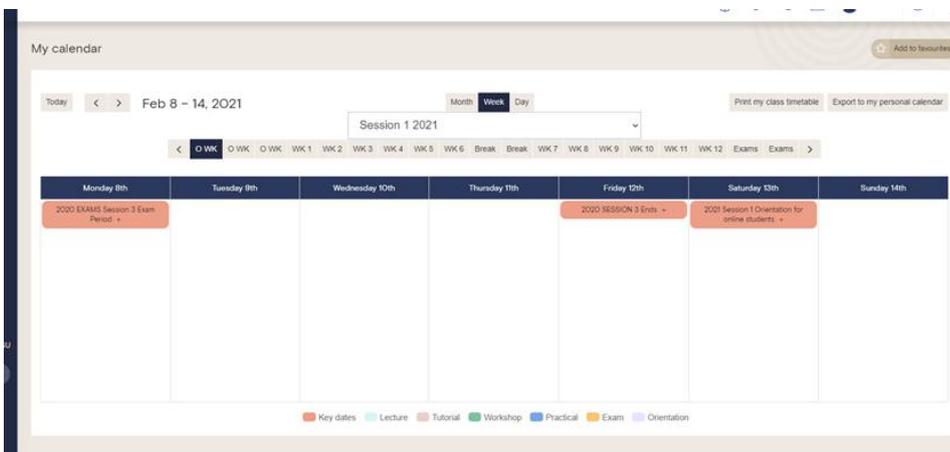
- a trackable checklist
- a progress tracker on the homepage
- streamlined information integrated from other systems
- personalisation (for example, we can now show targeted content about fees based on if the student is commonwealth supported, full fee paying, international on shore or international off shore)
- lockable content with a future live date (for example, 'Build my timetable' – students were often looking for things that weren't available yet. The lock enables us to communicate to students that something exists but it will become available later)
- a simplified version to help all students 'Prepare for next session'.

Interactive calendars for key dates, subjects and exams

Another key feature delivered is an improved interactive calendar. While students previously had to access multiple calendars without a central source of truth, they now have one calendar with two views. The new calendar integrates the student timetable, orientation calendar, exam dates and key student dates (personalised by the active teaching period that the student is enrolled in), so students can access the information they need, when and how they need it.



Small view from homepage



Large view with finer navigation

Feedback from students

The following feedback was received via the Student Voice Survey's wave three data in June.

“Great layouts with online portal which is easy to understand.”

– *On-campus student, Faculty of Science*

“I used to study at Swinburne, I find the student portal through Charles Sturt much more detailed and interact and portal are in the same area. With Swinburne the portal and canvas were different websites.”

– *Study Centre student, Faculty of Business, Justice and Behavioural Sciences*

“The staff are so caring and helpful. The online portal is always updated to the best it can be and CSU LISTENS! :)”

– *Online student, Faculty of Business, Justice and Behavioural Sciences*

“I gave this rating because of CSU's user-friendly online portal, amazing faculty, and best learning materials.”

– *Online student, Faculty of Business, Justice and Behavioural Sciences*

“Good support network, online portal much better set out than other university I attended. Lecturers have more passion for the subject.”

– *Online student, Faculty of Business, Justice and Behavioural Sciences*

Case Study 2

Project: InterviewStream

Who benefits: All CSU students as well as graduates up to 12 months post-course completion

Area (of CSU): Student Skills, Division of Student Services

Expenditure: \$14,231

Legislated SSAF spending areas:

- Helping students obtain employment or advice on careers
- Helping meet the specific needs of overseas students relating to their welfare, accommodation and employment

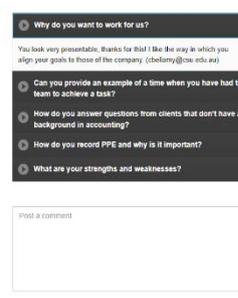
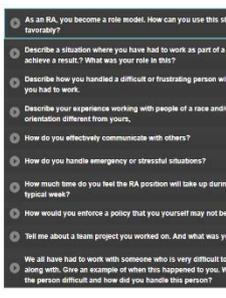
This project involved the purchase of an InterviewStream licence for a web-based (video) interview practise system. Interview practise for graduate employment is a vital part of career preparation training.

InterviewStream provides a simulated interview experience that allows students and graduates to draw on what they are learning or have learned about job application and interview processes, and then practise in a mock interview situation. InterviewStream enables students and graduates to go through the motions of actually trying to speak about themselves – addressing selection criteria and presenting themselves professionally.

InterviewStream is and has been embedded within a number of online and on campus subjects. Students can also use InterviewStream independently via their Student Portal. InterviewStream is accessible anywhere, at any time.

How it works

Students record themselves answering a practise set of customised interview questions. Afterwards, they receive an email with a link to their saved video recordings. Students can then assess their own performance using tools and resources made available via the InterviewStream website. Students can also share their recordings with others such as lecturers or Career Development Officers.



"InterviewStream was the first piece of software that I used to prepare myself for the interviews which were going to come after I graduated. InterviewStream is an excellent tool because I was able to record myself and then play it back to hear how I sounded (I think it's fair to say none of us like the sound of our own voice). For me, I noticed that I fidget when I'm thinking about the questions, which I felt made me look a little nervous. Now I go into interviews and visibly appear cool, calm and concise." Steven Seabrook

"In my view, InterviewStream is one of the best interview practicing options which certainly help undergrads to build their confidence to face a real-world interview." Jeewantha Karunathunga

Case Study 3

Project: Sex and Gender Diversity Awareness Programs
Who benefits: All students (as well as staff and our regional communities)
Area (of CSU): Division of Student Services
Expenditure: \$18,000

Legislated SSAF spending areas:

- Promoting the health or welfare of students
 - Helping students develop skills for study, by means other than undertaking courses of study in which they are enrolled
 - Giving students' information to help them in their orientation
-

Inclusion is one of Charles Sturt University's key values. As part of our commitment to the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ students, staff and our regional communities, the university continues to offer Sex and Gender Diversity programs, awareness raising initiatives and other celebrations and activities.

The Charles Sturt SSAF Committee has a long and proud history of funding support for Sex and Diversity Awareness programs (formerly known as the Ally Program) and other LGBTIQ+ inclusion initiatives.

Why is it important to promote LGBTIQ+ inclusion?

Members of the LGBTIQ+ community have significantly higher rates of suicidal ideation, personal crisis and poorer mental health than the general population, according to a 2019 report from The Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society and La Trobe University. The report identifies social factors that contribute to this include experiences of discrimination, harassment and violence, and ongoing social exclusion.

The 2019 Australian Workplace Equality Index Employee Survey found that visible signs of LGBTIQ+ inclusion are significantly lower in regional Australia. Only 57 per cent of respondents from regional areas said that there were visible signs of LGBTIQ+ inclusion, compared to 71 per cent of metropolitan respondents. LGBTIQ+ allies are not as visible in regional areas when compared to city locations. Only 42 per cent of regional respondents were aware of active allies compared to 72 per cent in cities. This was based on 27,349 responses, 4291 of whom were from regional Australia.

How has SSAF funding helped Sex and Gender Diversity programs and initiatives at Charles Sturt?

SSAF funding enables Sex and Gender initiatives that allow Charles Sturt students and staff to proudly celebrate significant days in the LGBTIQ+ calendar. These include IDAHOBIT (International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Interphobia and Transphobia), Wear It Purple LGBTIQ+ Awareness Day and Transgender Awareness Week. Celebrating these days visibly promotes inclusion of the LGBTIQ+ community on our regional campuses and as part of our institution. It is a chance to activate communication campaigns, fly rainbow flags, distribute resources and information for specific communities, and promote a network of students and staff who are Allies for the LGBTIQ+ community. Visible signs and allies show that we are an inclusive organisation and let people know they are safe to bring their whole selves to study, live or work on our campuses.

SSAF funds have enabled:

- purchase of Charles Sturt branded rainbow flags for use at events
- purchase of lanyards and lapel pins with the new logo for Allies who complete new Ally training planned for 2020
- purchase of Wagga Mardi Gras edition t-shirts for participants in the march
- networking opportunities for Ally network members
- the screening of *Untold Story: Country Town Pride* on our Wagga campus to celebrate Transgender Awareness Week.

Charles Sturt has used SSAF funding to run Ally training sessions over the past few years, resulting in a strong, independent Ally network. It is hoped that training will be enhanced in the future through joining Pride in Diversity who offer contemporary evidence based resources and training packages.

SSAF supported Sex and Gender Diversity training programs at Charles Sturt will be divided into two components in the future, where the first is designed to raise awareness of the LGBTIQ+ community, and the second allows participants to build skills to become and active Ally to the LGBTIQ+ community if they choose to. This will enable the provision of more awareness raising sessions regardless of people's choices to become an Ally. It also enables a robust Ally training program demonstrating what it means to be an Ally at Charles Sturt.

With ongoing SSAF funding, Charles Sturt has set some bold targets for the next calendar year. It is hoped more than 750 people will attend LGBTIQ+ awareness training, 200 new Allies will be trained, and three key days of LGBTIQ+ significance will be promoted and celebrated across the university.



Case Study 4

Project: Return Postage Scheme

Who benefits: Online Students

Area (of CSU): Division of Library Services

Expenditure: \$226,509

Legislated SSAF spending areas:

- Helping students with their financial affairs
-

Thanks to SSAF funding, online students living in Australia can return library resources to CSU free of charge via the Library Return Postage Scheme.

Equity of access for online students

Executive Director, Division of Library Services, Karen Johnson said the scheme grew out of a desire to provide CSU's online students with equity of access to print resources and a tangible benefit for their SSAF contribution.

"There is a trend towards electronic scholarly communication, and the Library is committed to equivalency of service to online students by providing electronic content whenever possible. However, many textbooks and scholarly books are still only available in print, which in the past placed the online student at a financial disadvantage as they were required to pay for the return of books to the Library."

The Return Postage Scheme provides students requesting print learning material with free outgoing and return postage by including a reply paid label and reusable packaging. To maximise the time students have with the requested resource, express post is used for interstate material and high demand items. In late 2019 the Library started using eParcel Post, which provides parcel tracking. Students can now track the progress of their parcel while it is in transit, providing greater surety where their loan request is within the postal system.

Feedback from students

Feedback from students who accessed the scheme in 2019 shows how the SSAF funding is instrumental to the Library being able to support our online students in an impactful way, contributing to successful graduate outcomes for our online students.

"I found the return postage scheme to be hugely beneficial to my studies and helped to remove one of the barriers to getting the right resources to help complete my course." Faculty of Science (School of Environmental Sciences)

"As a distance student it is the only way for me to access some of this material which is not all digitised. The service makes me feel more connected to the university which I am unlikely to ever visit, and receiving books in the post makes me feel like a valued member of the university community." Faculty of Arts and Education (School of Information Studies)

"The return postage scheme is like a gift to online students. To be able to search online for a book, have it delivered and simply post it back from the postal box at the end of my street opens up the possibility to research far and wide." Faculty of Arts and Education (School of Humanities and Social Sciences)

"The service is outstanding value, whilst being further enhance by the more than capable library staff, whom always make themselves available." Faculty of Science (School of Agriculture and Wine Sciences)

Case Study 5

Project: Eco Walk, Bathurst Campus (SS2016-08)

Who benefits: Residential School Students. On Campus Students, Residential Accommodation Students and University Staff

Area (of CSU): Division of Facilities Management

Expenditure: \$120,000

Legislated SSAF spending areas:

- Supporting a sporting or other recreational activity by students
 - Promoting the health or welfare of students
-

The Bathurst Eco Walk project provides a 3km gravel path through the Bathurst Campus to form part of the broader Eco Walk, which provides an enjoyable and relaxing circuit of the campus.

The stretch of the walk that was constructed as part of this project stretches along Hawthornden Creek, through areas of biodiversity rejuvenation areas to the Diggings Oval before joining back to the existing pathways at Building 1220. The Eco Walk highlights various ecological, historic and cultural areas within the campus.

Promoting the health and welfare of students

The university supports the physical, psychological wellbeing of its students, residents and community members. All are encouraged to take the Eco Walk to help maintain their health and enjoy the local habitat, flora and fauna.

The project scope included:

- installation of gravel paths including earthworks
- new interpretive signage
- installation of interpretive mosaic artwork
- mapping the Eco Walk within FMCentral.



