

# SSAF

– Enhancing student life



THIS IS A  
**SSAF**  
FUNDED INITIATIVE

## Letter from Dean of Students



Hello, I'm Julia Coyle, Dean of Students and Chair of the SSAF Steering Committee.

The Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) has been in place since 2012, introduced by the Federal Government to replace Voluntary Student Unionism.

The fee allows universities like CSU to fund non-academic services, support and facilities. This could include discounted food and beverage services on campus, a new intuitive web portal, return postage for library books or student counselling and advisory services.

Whatever the project or initiative, SSAF funds are used to enhance student life. At CSU we're mindful of the varying needs of our different student groups and look for innovative ways to use SSAF funds to ensure the broadest range of students see the benefits of these funds.

SSAF spending decisions are made by a top-level steering committee comprising executive Faculty and Divisional staff and student representatives. This committee determines spending in alignment with student need, student preferences and University strategy.

Student input is vital in this process, which is why we ask students to 'Put your stamp on SSAF' by having a say via a number of ways – participating in the yearly SSAF survey, putting forward a funding proposal in the Student Submission Round or talking to their local SRC or Student Liaison Officer.

This report outlines the results from last year's SSAF survey and gives an insight into successful proposals and how CSU uses SSAF funds to benefit students.

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](mailto:ssaf@csu.edu.au).

Regards,

**Julia Coyle**  
Dean of Students

## Letter from Student Senate



Do you ever wonder why you pay \$36 per subject and where it goes?

As the name suggests, this Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF), helps to finance services and amenities that CSU students want and need. Items may include recreational and sporting equipment on campus, improvements

to the student portal, the provision of free return postage on library books to distance education students and assistance to student clubs.

On the Port Macquarie Campus where I am based, there is no on campus accommodation. Students here applied for SSAF funding to help pay for a student to take on the role of accommodation assistant and help new students source accommodation in the Port Macquarie area. The SSAF Funding also funded the CSU Student Leadership Conference in late 2015. This conference allowed all SRC and Senate members to receive leadership training to help better each individual campus and the University as a whole.

You'll see other examples of the projects SSAF funding has paid for in this report. Remember, all SSAF-funded initiatives will have the SSAF stamp on them so it's easy to identify them around your campus, in print and online.

As you pay SSAF, it's really important you help decide where it goes!

There are a number of ways to have your say, and they are outlined in this report.

The SSAF Steering Committee makes all funding decisions and the CSU Student Senate is an important voice on that committee.

So have a read of this report and keep an eye out for opportunities to have your say on SSAF in 2016 – make sure your voice is heard!

**Melissa Gregory**  
PortSRC President  
Senate Vice President, Acting Senate President

# WHAT IS SSAF?

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 CSU to enhance the range and quality of support services available to both on campus and distance education students, helping to improve and enrich student life.

Some of the student-centred projects initiated under SSAF include the Student Portal, new and improved sporting facilities, employment and careers advice, discounted food and beverage services, and student counselling and advice.

In the Higher Education Legislation Amendment (Student Services and Amenities) Act 2011, the Commonwealth Government identified the 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 described)
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.

# SSAF AT CSU

In 2016, the SSAF is \$36 per 8 point subject students are enrolled in with a maximum annual fee of \$288 per student, SSAF is considered a compulsory fee and as such most CSU students are required to pay.

For more information on who is exempt from SSAF and how to pay or defer your SSAF, please visit: [student.csu.edu.au/finances/current-year-fees-and-charges/ssaf](http://student.csu.edu.au/finances/current-year-fees-and-charges/ssaf)

## Who decides how SSAF is spent?

The SSAF Steering Committee determines how SSAF funds are spent at CSU. Its purpose is to provide a forum for collaborative discussion about SSAF expenditure and ensure funds are appropriately distributed.

Comprised of student representatives and representatives of faculties and divisions, this committee relies on student and staff submissions and historical data to ensure that funds are distributed equitably and responsibly, in accordance with student need and spending preferences.

As well as ensuring funds are used to enhance the student experience, it's also the committee's role to enhance the ways students are informed about SSAF income, the spending process and available services. This report is just one of these ways of informing CSU students and staff.

## Who's on CSU's SSAF Steering Committee?

	Dean of Students (Presiding Officer)
	Student Senate President
	Student Senate Executive team member
	Division of Facilities Management Representative (Executive Director or Nominee)
	Division of Finance Representative
	Executive Director of Division of Information Technology
	Faculty representative of the Executive Deans
	Executive Director of Marketing and Communication



## Student voice

As the essence of SSAF is to improve and enrich student life, it's vital that students "put their stamp on SSAF" and have a say in how their fees are spent.

In the first session of each year, CSU calls for students to put forward their ideas to enhance student services and amenities via the Student Submission Round.

The Steering Committee ensures that assistance is available with the execution of student proposals. This includes advice on funding remittance, assessing submissions, and assisting students to effectively report on project outcomes. It also ensures that students who put forward unsuccessful submissions are provided with feedback to help them understand SSAF spending priorities and processes and also inform future submissions.

Students are also asked to rank the 19 government criteria in order of preference for future spending, and provide feedback on their awareness of and sentiments towards SSAF, in an annual online survey. This survey will take place again in Session 2, 2016.

Throughout the year, students can also have their say on SSAF via Student Representative Councils, their Student Liaison Officers or direct to the Office for Students via [ssaf@csu.edu.au](mailto:ssaf@csu.edu.au).

## Staff submission round

In October each year, staff are asked to put forward their ideas on SSAF expenditure in the annual Staff Submission Round.

As with student submissions, these proposals need to address student need and are developed collaboratively with Faculties and Divisions across CSU to ensure a 'whole of university' approach.

The SSAF Steering Committee reviews these submissions against government requirements and funds those student-centred projects and initiatives that best align with student needs, existing programs and CSU strategies.



# WHAT HAS SSAF FUNDED?

Since its introduction in 2012, SSAF has helped fund more than \$6.9M worth of new and refurbished student spaces, a suite of student services (like counselling) and more than 90 projects driven by students and staff alike.

SSAF contributed to more than 40 projects in 2015, including:

- The Wellness and Wellbeing Expo
- Club first aid assistance and training
- The Student Leadership Conference
- An Accommodation Assistant in Port Macquarie
- The CSU International Student Consultation Group

## SSAF in action

### CASE STUDY

**WHAT: Student Portal – student web space**

**WHO BENEFITS:** All students

**AREA (OF CSU):** Office for Students in collaboration with the Division of IT

**EXPENDITURE:** \$360,000

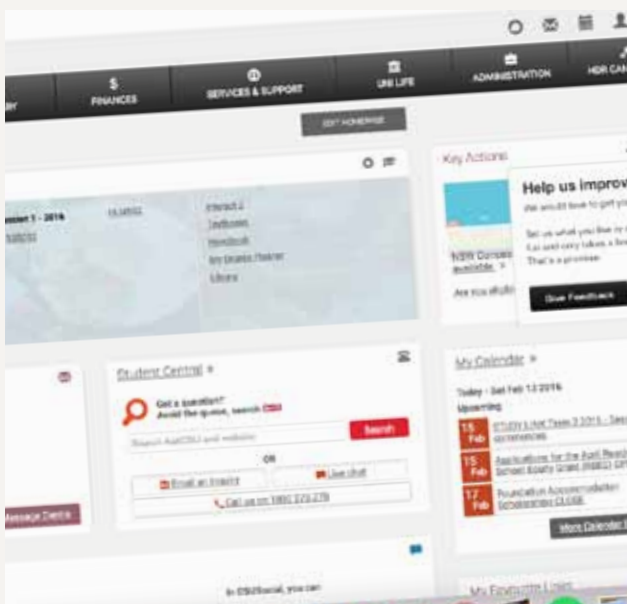
**LEGISLATED SSAF SPENDING AREAS:** Promoting the health or welfare of students; helping students secure accommodation; helping students obtain employment or advice on careers; helping students with their financial affairs; helping students develop skills for study, by means other than undertaking courses of study in which they are enrolled; advising on matters arising under the higher education provider's rules; giving students information to help them in their orientation

Feedback from students told us that the old student.csu space was complex, difficult to navigate and that information was hard to locate. Launched in July 2015, the new Student Portal involves:

- a revised website layout geared at maximising students ability to locate critical information
- a homepage that is intelligently personalised for each student (that is, it recognises the person logging on)
- the ability for students to alter the layout of their home page in the portal
- the display of prominent links and relevant information for key tasks such as making payments and reading messages
- a modernised look and feel
- improved search capabilities
- mobile friendly design and improved accessibility

### WHAT CSU STUDENTS HAD TO SAY:

*"Having been a student since 2004, I can say that the new student portal is THE BEST, particularly in comparison to the old my.csu (which was pretty great back in the day, to be fair). There has clearly been a lot of thought and effort put into this, and there are far too many positives to list here. For example, the fact I can see my CSU card balance on the home page instead of having to go through several pages - such a small thing, but it makes life so much easier! The best thing is, while I imagine that a heck of a lot of work went in to making all of the systems 'play nice' so that the dashboard is populated with the essential info, it happens so seamlessly that as a user you don't notice it - in a good way. I was skeptical when I heard the student portal was being updated, but this has really surpassed my expectations. Congratulations on a job well done."*



## CASE STUDY

### WHAT: Return postage scheme

**WHO BENEFITS:** Distance education students

**AREA (OF CSU):** Division of Library Services

**EXPENDITURE:** \$296,600 to date

**LEGISLATED SSAF SPENDING AREA:** helping students with their financial affairs

Thanks to SSAF funding, CSU's Distance Education (DE) students living in Australia can return library resources to CSU free of charge via the Library Return Postage Scheme.

Executive Director, Division of Library Services, Karen Johnson said the scheme grew out of a desire to provide DE 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 DE 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 DE student at a financial disadvantage as they were required to pay for the return of books to the Library."

The scheme eliminates the financial burden of returning books to CSU by including a postage-paid return address label in each DE postage parcel sent by the Library. Students simply affix this label to their parcel when returning printed resources.

"First implemented in 2012, the Library Return Postage Scheme has proven very popular with DE students, who take advantage of the scheme to borrow more than 40,000 books per annum."

### WHAT CSU STUDENTS HAD TO SAY:

- "I am SO happy that this is available. No other uni I've studied with has such a service. It saves me a ton [of] money on buying books that would only get used once anyway! Thanks CSU!"
- "This means I can order the books I need rather than those I can afford to send back."
- "I can't emphasise enough how important and vital this service is to my studies."
- "I don't think I would be able to get through DE study without it."
- "Would not know how to do thorough research without this fantastic and prompt service."

## CASE STUDY

### WHAT: Sports Complex

**WHO BENEFITS:** Albury-Wodonga students

**AREA (OF CSU):** Division of Facilities Management

**EXPENDITURE:** \$250,000

**LEGISLATED SSAF SPENDING AREA:** supporting a sporting or other recreational activity by students; promoting the health or welfare of students

Students at Albury-Wodonga now have a dedicated place on campus to combine learning and leisure thanks to a new sport and recreation facility.

Opened in 2014, the complex includes:

- grass playing areas
- multi-purpose courts
- basketball / netball half-court
- roofed bleacher to seat 60 spectators
- new steel-framed shelter
- barbecues and benches
- landscaped gardens, including dedicated footpaths
- new lighting

### WHAT CSU STUDENTS HAD TO SAY:

*"Having somewhere that is a great communal space is fantastic for the campus. There are always people down there shooting hoops or kicking a footy around. The barbecues and seating area make it a really social meeting area. The complex adds a lot to the University and shows there is more to university life than lectures and learning."*



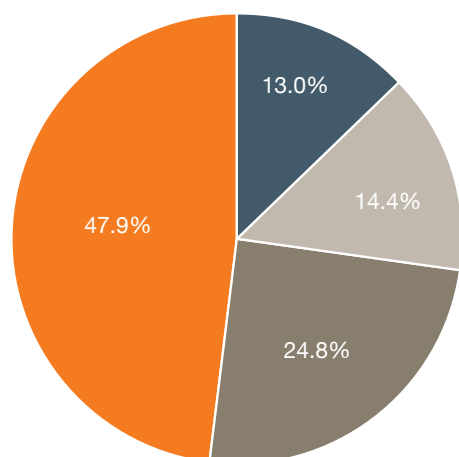
# SSAF SURVEY RESULTS

In July 2015, a student survey looked at the awareness of and student sentiment towards SSAF.

The survey also ranked the 19 government criteria in order of preference for future spending. More than 1600 students completed the survey, with respondents found to be representative of the broader CSU student population.

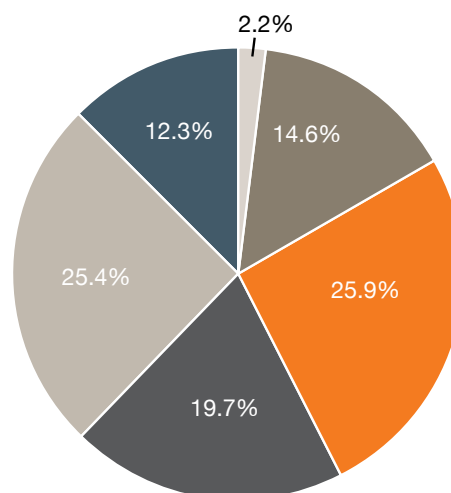
## SSAF Awareness

**When did you first become aware of the Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF)?**



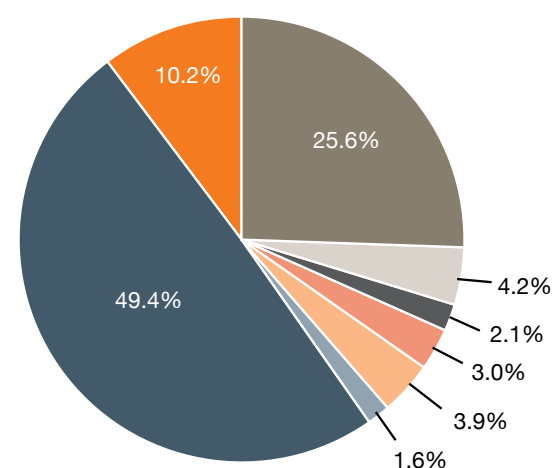
- Prior to choosing to study at CSU
- Between applying to study at CSU and the start of my first session
- After I commenced as a student at CSU
- Upon reading this survey

**Is it clear to you what SSAF funds are used for?**



- Extremely unclear
- Unclear
- Somewhat unclear
- Somewhat clear
- Clear
- Extremely clear

**How did you first become aware of the Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF)?**



- Reading the CSU website
- Reading another university's website
- Reading a government website
- Reading a CSU publication
- Through friends or family
- Lecturers / tutors
- When I recieved my SSAF invoice
- I was not aware of SSAF until starting this survey

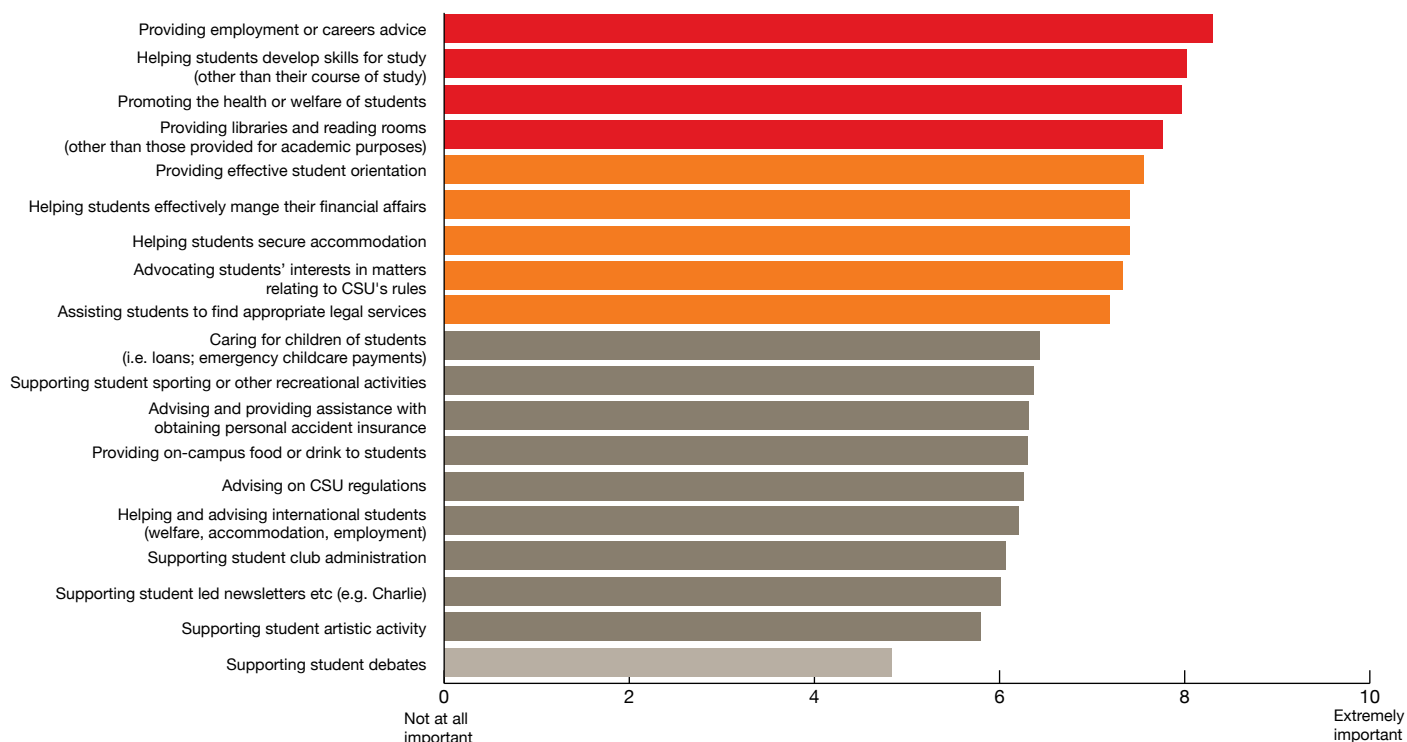
## Preferences for spending

The survey asked students to prioritise their preferences for how SSAF is spent. The top five areas were identified as:

- Careers advice
- Developing study skills
- Health and welfare services
- Library facilities
- Orientation

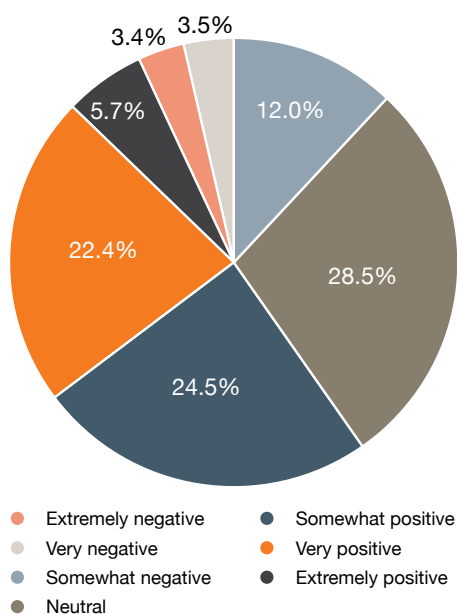


## Spending priorities of students



## Feelings about SSAF

Students were asked to provide advice on their feelings towards SSAF. Interestingly the majority (52.6%) felt positive about SSAF.



### Students happy with

- ✓ student portal
- ✓ security
- ✓ inclusion experienced as new students living away from home for the first time
- ✓ free return postage on library books for DE students



### Students not happy with

- ✗ some students thought that SSAF was somehow linked to student unionism (even though compulsory student unionism was abolished in 2007)
- ✗ Distance Education students struggled to identify tangible benefits from paying SSAF

# LOOKING FORWARD

There are a number of SSAF initiatives planned for 2016. These include new and refurbished student spaces, projects suggested by students and staff, and Office for Students services.

## Student submission round

Student submissions were received in May and June 2015. A total of 16 submissions were received.

Successful submissions:

- CSU International Consultation Group
- Hospitality and community building at United Theological College
- Improved student engagement at St. Marks, Canberra
- Accommodation Assistant position at Port Macquarie
- Wednesday gatherings at Port Macquarie
- On campus entertainment at Port Macquarie
- School of Animal and Veterinary Science student mentoring program

## Staff submission round

Staff submissions were received in October and November 2015. More than 40 submissions were received and 23 of these were successful. Some of these include:

- Supplying amenities at the NSW Policing Academy
- The CSU ALLY Program
- Student digital communications internships
- CSU Study Centre sports
- Student Leadership Program
- On Campus student transport
- Provision of study coaches

## Office for Students allocations

Available for students both online and on campus:

- A new approach to CSU's Careers Service, with additional staff
- Additional student counsellors
- Mental Health First Aid programs
- Orientation Programs
- A new Elite Athlete Officer
- Study Stays subscription

## New on campus facilities

- Soccer training facility, Bathurst Campus
- Canteen facility for Diggings Oval, Bathurst Campus
- Parent room and breastfeeding facility, Orange Campus
- BBQ facility, Orange Campus
- Weather Shelter, Wagga Wagga Campus
- New netball court, Wagga Wagga Campus
- Recreational facility, Port Macquarie Campus
- Quiet study and allied student space, Dubbo Campus
- Outdoor gym facilities, Albury-Wodonga, Bathurst and Wagga Wagga campuses
- Bike park and storage, Albury-Wodonga and Bathurst campuses

Keep an eye out for this stamp to identify the projects and initiatives funded by SSAF.



## Dates for this year

**Student Round:** April 4 - June 6, 2016

**Student Survey:** Second Session, 2016

**Staff Round:** September 19 - November 14, 2016

## Where to go for more information

VISIT [student.csu.edu.au/finances/current-year-fees-and-charge/ssaf](http://student.csu.edu.au/finances/current-year-fees-and-charge/ssaf) or email [ssaf@csu.edu.au](mailto:ssaf@csu.edu.au)





Where to go for more information

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