Charles Sturt University Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) 2023 Allocation Report

2023 SSAF Allocation Report
Division of Finance & Division of Student Experience
Charles Sturt University

Executive Summary

The *Higher Education Support (Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy) Guidelines 2022* require higher education providers to provide a publicly available report on student services and amenities fee (SSAF) allocations and actual expenditure for the year as part of their annual reporting and in the form approved by the Minister. This *SSAF Allocation Report* is the form approved by the Minister.

Additional reporting was introduced to allow for greater transparency and consistency in SSAF allocations and expenditure.

Please note, the information provided in this *SSAF Allocation Report* does **not** require auditing by a financial accountant. The SSAF expenditure reporting remains unchanged, more information can be found in the Financial Statements Guidelines for Table A and B providers, and in the *Financial Viability Instructions: Applicants and Providers of FEE-HELP* (FVI) for all other approved providers.

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Introduction

Dear Students, Staff and Stakeholders,

We are pleased to present the 2023 Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) annual report. This report is designed to provide you with an overview on how the financial contributions made by our students have been allocated across Charles Sturt University campuses and online for the benefit of our students.

2023 saw an increase in on campus and online activities supported by SSAF funding. SSAF continued to be supported with a staff and student working group, committed to overseeing the provision of funding for maximum student impact. Several continuing services were supported to increase student engagement and support, including increased mental health support, while some new initiatives sought to recognise the increasing and changing needs of students. Popular initiatives included on campus food, enhanced relaxation spaces and intensive school support for online students. Some of the key initiatives for 2023 were:
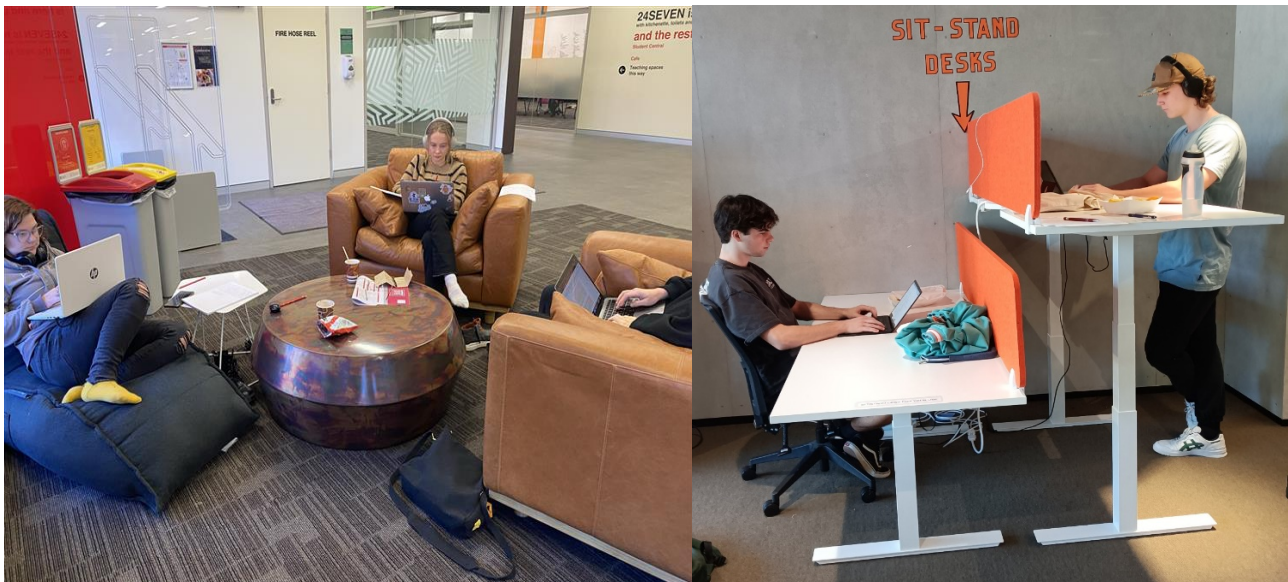
Case Study #1: Enhancing Library Spaces

Directly addressing student requests for more "cozy" and "connected" spaces, ergonomic furniture and adequate parents' facilities, this initiative provided students with enhanced areas across all six Charles Sturt University campuses. The upgrades included ergonomic chairs, sit-stand desks, recreational seating and white goods for the parent facilities in Wagga Wagga.

"Everything we do in the Library is about connecting with students – which is about the spaces as well as the services . . . Since the new furniture came in I have seen a real shift in the atmosphere in Wagga Library. Students relaxing and socialising with each other. I've seen students sleeping on the lounges, and I love that we've created a space that they feel comfortable enough in to fall asleep!"

Carlo Iaconi, Charles Sturt University Librarian, 2023

"So nice to have such nice, comfortable furniture, it makes the place very welcoming"

Charles Sturt International student, 2023

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Case Study #2: Drug and Alcohol Proactive Programming

Subject matter experts from Alcohol Drug Education Specialists (ADES) facilitated face-to-face training with over 80 student leaders in preparation for 2024 Orientation. The training focused on alcohol and drug awareness education, along with providing student leaders with strategies for harm minimisation and positively impacting cultures in student residences. The training aimed to achieve the following outcomes:

- Equipping Student Leaders with appropriate knowledge and education regarding the use of drugs and alcohol.
- Ensuring Student Leaders have appropriate knowledge, intervention strategies and referral networks when faced with instances of drug or alcohol abuse.
- Coaching for Student Leaders to role model appropriate behaviour in relation to drug and alcohol use for all students living on campus.

The program also included online education, safety and wellbeing modules for more than 2050 students.
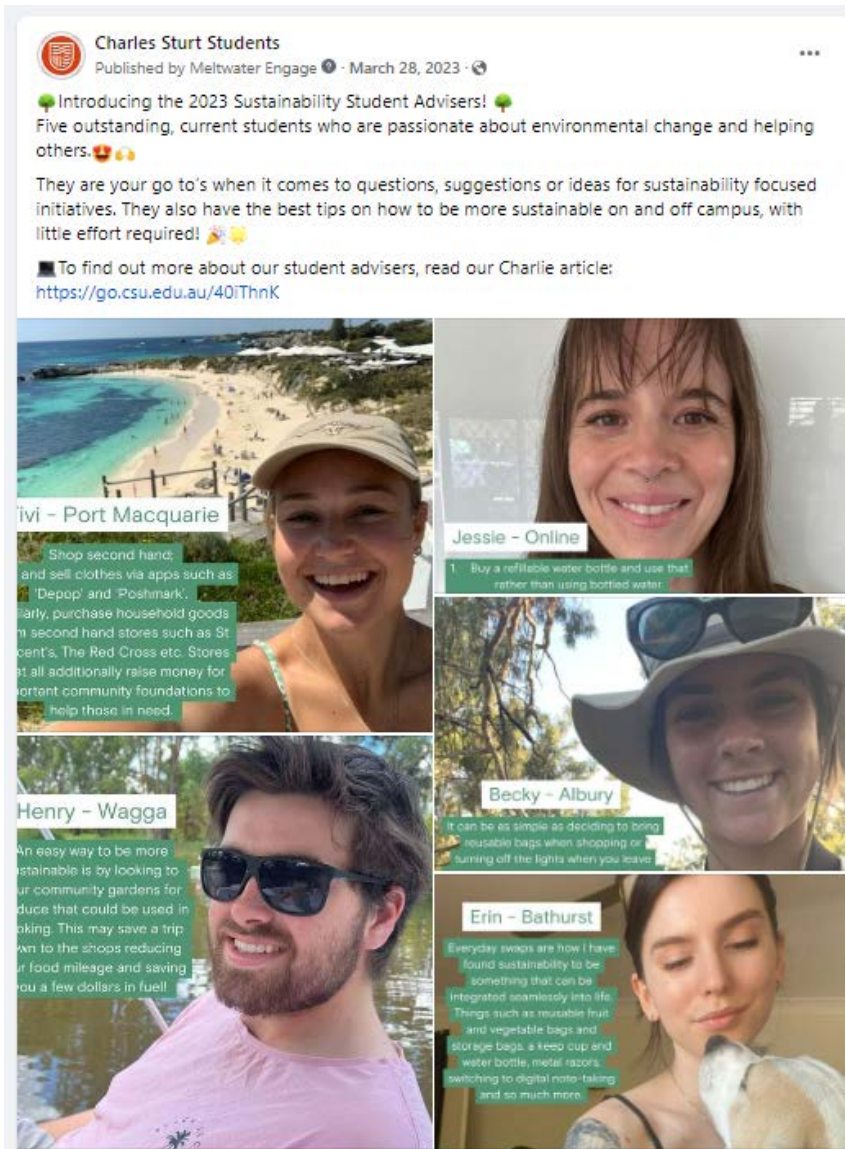

Case Study #3: Student Digital Communications

Student-created content is essential for promoting student voices and perspectives. The key communication activities conducted by students provide opportunities for them to be paid for articles and social media.

The Charlie Blog is a key communication tool allowing students to provide peer reviews and detail their experiences. SSAF funding supports a student editor and communication assistants for the blog. Students from across the university are invited to participate and receive $75 per article.

In 2023 the blog achieved a 107 per cent increase in student contributions, with page views increasing by 61 per cent and average time on pages increasing by 50 per cent, indicating students appreciation and enjoyment of this peer-to-peer content.

"*Thank you for the work you do! As an online student, Charlie provides a more casual connection to the university (as opposed to strictly serious academia) and has created a sense of belonging and support.*"

Charles Sturt University online student, 2023

Social media created by students provides content that is relatable and effective, with student-generated content this year gaining 12,000 more engagements than last year and video views up by 144 per cent.

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Charles Sturt Students
Published by Meltwater Engage · March 28, 2023 ·

🌳 Introducing the 2023 Sustainability Student Advisers! 🌳
Five outstanding, current students who are passionate about environmental change and helping others. 🤩 🙌

They are your go to's when it comes to questions, suggestions or ideas for sustainability focused initiatives. They also have the best tips on how to be more sustainable on and off campus, with little effort required! 🎉 💛

🖥 To find out more about our student advisers, read our Charlie article:
https://go.csu.edu.au/40iThnK

In 2023, the SSAF Working Group conducted a review of SSAF administration and consultation involving key stakeholders and students. The feedback has enabled a more streamlined process to be put in place with a clear focus on student-led decision making through our student representative bodies. Charles Sturt University remains committed to supporting our students in considering SSAF proposals and ensuring that funding adheres to guidelines, benefitting a variety of impactful initiatives for our diverse student community.

On behalf of Charles Sturt University, I would like to thank our student representatives, our SRCs, Student Senate and staff for their time and dedication to SSAF initiatives, ensuring that the funding continues to deliver services and support for Charles Sturt University students.

Sandra Sharpham
Executive Director, Division of Student Experience

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SSAF Consultation and Achievements

According to the Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy Guidelines and the Higher Education Legislation Amendment (Student Services and Amenities) Act 2011, Higher Education Providers (HEPs) are required to consult with students enrolled at the HEP regarding the specific uses of proceeds from any compulsory SSAF.

Charles Sturt University has established a process to oversee all SSAF matters and endorse a strategic approach to SSAF funding, with the goal of achieving significant impact on the student experience. SSAF funding is closely aligned to our student priorities for SSAF expenditure, as identified in the annual Student Voice Survey results from the previous year.

Charles Sturt University is committed to a formal consultation process with democratically elected student representatives regarding the specific uses of proceeds from SSAF and has demonstrated this commitment through:

1. Undertaking an annual student survey which includes SSAF questions, consideration of the feedback provided by students on their top priority areas for the spending of SSAF money, publishing identified priorities for proposed fee expenditure and allowing opportunities to comment on those priorities by students and student associations.

   Top student preferences in 2023:

   o Health & wellbeing
   o Careers advice & programs
   o Student club activities and events
   o Providing food and drink to students
   o Student Leadership program
   o Online and on campus orientation

2. Publishing an Annual SSAF report that outlines SSAF expenditure, details of SSAF projects funded and outlines the strategic priorities for SSAF funding:

   How student services amenities fees are spent - Current Students (csu.edu.au)

3. The key sponsor for SSAF at Charles Sturt is the Executive Director, Division of Student Experience in consultation with two Student Representatives nominated by Student Senate, representing campus and online modes of study along with the Manager Division and Grants, Division of Finance. The sponsor also engages with SRCs to facilitate their assessment and endorsement of recurring and new initiatives.

4. Discussion of SSAF matters via Student Senate meetings; and Student Representative Council review and recommendation of student and staff initiatives via an annual round process.

   Current process of the SSAF allocation requires review and endorsement by the Student Representative Council (SRC). Staff and student initiatives are distributed to each campus SRCs (via Student Connection Team, Division of Student Experience). SRCs are asked to submit the outcome of their review for consideration by the Chief Operating Officer, via Executive Director, Student Experience. This allows for greater consultation, student management and transparency in the allocation of projects. SRCs are provided a table of all successful initiatives from the annual round that will be funded.

6. SSAF website page lists all projects and programs to be funded throughout the year:

   How student services amenities fees are spent - Current Students (csu.edu.au)

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SSAF Revenue Summary

	2023 Allocation $[1]	2023 Actual $
SSAF Revenue	$5,350,092	$4,856,474
SSAF revenue carried forward from 2022	$4,638,664	$4,659,000
Total SSAF funds available for 2023	**$9,988,756**	**$9,515,474**
Total SSAF Expenditure for 2023		**$5,651,047**
SSAF revenue carried over into 2024		$3,864,427

[1] Allocation refers to the SSAF funds expected to be received in the reported year (i.e. budgeted SSAF revenue).

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SSAF Charge Summary

The student services and amenities fee (SSAF) charged to students must not be above the maximum fee for a calendar year. The maximum SSAF is indexed annually as required by the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*. In 2023 the maximum SSAF was $320.

Student Status	2023 SSAF charged $[2]	Number of students charged in 2023
Full-time[1] (> 0.75 EFTSL)	$3,466,824	15,386
Part-time[1] (< 0.75 EFTSL)	$1,389,650	15,871
	Total:	**31,257**

[1] Note: As per Part 2 of the *Higher Education Support (Administration) Guidelines 2022* (Administration Guidelines), students studying on a part-time basis must not be charged more than 75 per cent of the maximum SSAF that a higher education provider determines for students studying on a full-time basis. The term "part-time basis" is identified as a study load of less than 75 per cent of the normal full-time student load for the period to which the fee relates. As per part 7 of the Administration Guidelines, the normal EFTSL value for a full-time student studying over a period of one year is 1.0.

[2] Note: As per Part 2 of the Administration Guidelines, a higher education provider may choose to determine a different SSAF for particular categories of persons, including a zero amount.

[3] Note: Students are categorised as full-time or part-time students based on the total EFTSL value of the units of study they undertook in 2023. For example, a student undertook a full-time study load in Semester 1 which was equal to 0.5 EFTSL and undertook a part-time study load in Semester 2 which was equal to 0.375 EFTSL. This student would be categorised as a full-time student in 2023 as the total EFTSL they undertook in 2023 was equal to 0.875.

Student Status	2023 SSAF charged $[2]	Approx. number of SSAF students remote learning 2023[4]
Online only	**$2,889,999***	**23,498**

*Calculations are an estimate only based on SSAF income against EFTSL

[4] Note: The Department understands that not all higher education providers capture mode of study in their information systems and many students undertake a mixed mode of study such as face-to-face and remote learning. The data provided above is for students who undertook remote learning for 100% of their units of study. Please note, due to the limitations of our information systems, the above data may be approximate.

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SSAF Allocation Summary

Subsection 19-38(4) of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (the Act) provides a list of 19 allowable expenditure items which higher education providers may allocate and spend SSAF revenue on.
Please note, under subsection 19-38 of the Act, SSAF revenue must not be spent to support a political party or the election of a person as a member of the legislature of the Commonwealth, State or a Territory, or a local government body.

Key Area	2023 Total Allocation $	2023 Total Actual Spend $	Are services available online?	Estimated No. of students accessing services
1. Health and Wellbeing Services	984,424	871,110	Yes	5K+
2. Careers and Leadership	547,474	406,477	Yes	12,831
3. Sporting	694,712	681,894	Yes	1.5K+
4. Student Services, Support and Events	1,439,108	1,338,261	Services and Support Yes	3826
5. Student Advocacy	280,330	247,638	Yes	964
6. IT Services and Student Support	612,000	518,220	Yes	25K+
7. Financial Support	107,790	47,713	Yes	425
8. Student Communications	404,911	366,900	Yes	25K+
9. Helping Students Secure Accommodation and Study Stays	20,000	17,600	Yes	286
10. Orientation	306,270	302,489	Portion	25K+
11. Other student amenities	847,545	503,641	NA	Not able to be defined
12. Food and Beverage for Students on campus including Intensive Schools	96,080	77,709	Portion	7,667
13. International Students Support	306,725	271,395	No	576
Total	**6,647,369**	**5,651,047**	**80% Available to Online Students**	30,000 plus

Note: These on campus services and amenities are available to online students who attend intensive school sessions.

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Declaration by Person of Authority

I, Sandra Sharpham, Executive Director, Student Experience of Charles Sturt University, declare that the information provided in this Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) Allocation Report is to the best of my knowledge true, complete and correct.

………………………………………………………………………………………….
Signature of Person making Declaration

Sandra Sharpham
Full name of Person making Declaration

Executive Director, Student Experience
Position of Person making Declaration

07 June 2024
Date

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