LA TROBE UNIVERSITY

Academic Portfolio

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY 2027 STUDENT SERVICES AND AMENITIES FEE (SSAF) CONSULTATION FRAMEWORK

September 2026

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PURPOSE

This Framework outlines La Trobe University's approach to ensuring formal, transparent, and meaningful consultation with students on the use and allocation of Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) revenue.

It ensures compliance with the *Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth)* and *the Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy Guidelines 2022*, which require higher education providers to maintain a clearly defined and effective consultation process, reviewed and approved annually by the governing body.

SSAF OVERVIEW

The Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) is a legislated charge under the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth) that funds non-academic services and amenities to support student wellbeing, engagement and success.

At La Trobe University, SSAF is administered in accordance with the *Student Fees Policy,* with expenditure and reporting governed by legislative requirements. Funding supports a broad range of services, including health and wellbeing, sport and recreation, employability and career advice, development of skills for study and student representation, with allowable categories prescribed by the Australian Government.

PRINCIPLES

SSAF consultation at La Trobe University is underpinned by the following principles:

- **Student Partnership:** students have a genuine voice in setting priorities and shaping services.
- **Transparency**: proposed priorities, consultation outcomes, and final decisions are clearly communicated to students.
- **Inclusivity and Accessibility:** consultation mechanisms are accessible and reflective of La Trobe's diverse student cohorts, including online, regional, equity, and international students.
- **Evidence-Informed Decision Making:** decisions are informed by student feedback, service performance data, and student experience insights.
- **Legislative Compliance and Accountability:** consultation processes align with legislative and policy requirements.

CONSULTATION APPROACH

In accordance with the Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy Guidelines 2022, La Trobe University undertakes structured and ongoing consultation with students and democratically elected student representatives from student-led organisations on the use and prioritisation of Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) revenue.

Consultation is integrated into the University's annual SSAF planning cycle and supports transparent, evidence-informed decision-making that meets legislative requirements and reflects student priorities.

Consultation activities cover:

- the purpose of SSAF
- the prioritisation of SSAF-funded activities

- student satisfaction with SSAF-funded activities
- awareness of SSAF

At a minimum, La Trobe's SSAF Consultation Framework incorporates the following mechanisms which provide both broad and targeted opportunities for participation, ensuring that consultation is inclusive, representative, and evidence-based:

- Annual University-Wide Student Survey
- Student Focus Groups
- Recognised Student Led Organisation (SLO) Engagement
- Student Council Engagement
- Continuous Feedback Channels
- Student Services Advisory Group (SSAG)

Annual University-Wide Student Survey

The La Trobe Experience Survey (LES) is a core consultation mechanism, capturing input from a large and representative sample (more than 7,000) of students annually. The survey provides SSAF-specific insights into student priorities, satisfaction with funded services, and emerging needs. Findings directly inform SSAF priorities and are considered through the University's established decision-making processes, forming a key component of the evidence base for SSAF planning and decision making.

Student Focus Groups

Student focus groups, delivered in partnership with the Student Voice and Partnerships team, capture in-depth qualitative insights into SSAF-funded services and student priorities across campuses, delivery modes and diverse cohorts.

Findings are systematically documented and analysed, contributing to the evidence base that informs SSAF planning, prioritisation, and decision-making.

Recognised Student Led Organisation Engagement

Regular consultation occurs with elected representatives from recognised SLOs, ensuring student perspectives and priorities inform SSAF decision-making. In addition, quarterly meetings between recognised SLO representatives and University stakeholders provide a structured forum for ongoing dialogue and collaboration regarding SSAF-funded services and activities. Representatives from recognised SLOs are also members of the Student Services Advisory Group (SSAG), further strengthening student input.

Student Council Engagement

La Trobe's Student Council provides ongoing feedback and advice regarding SSAF. In line with its annual requirements, the Student Council represents and consults with enrolled students across all La Trobe campuses and modes of study. This representative and consultative function is embedded within the Student Council's annual program of work, including structured engagement activities such as student forums delivered in partnership with the Student Voice and Partnerships team. The Student Council is also represented on the SSAG.

Continuous Feedback Channels

La Trobe provides continuous avenues for all students to share feedback on SSAF priorities.

A dedicated SSAF feedback channel is maintained via the University website, enabling students to submit comments, suggestions, and emerging priorities at any time. These inputs are regularly reviewed and incorporated into SSAF planning and service improvement processes.

Other feedback channels are facilitated through the Student Voice and Partnerships team, which undertakes ongoing, year-round engagement with students across a broad range of topics and services. This includes delivering targeted activities, consultations and focus groups to capture student perspectives on the wider student experience. This engagement generates themes and insights that are analysed and, where relevant, used to complement and enrich the findings from dedicated SSAF consultation processes, including SSAF focus groups.

Student Services Advisory Group

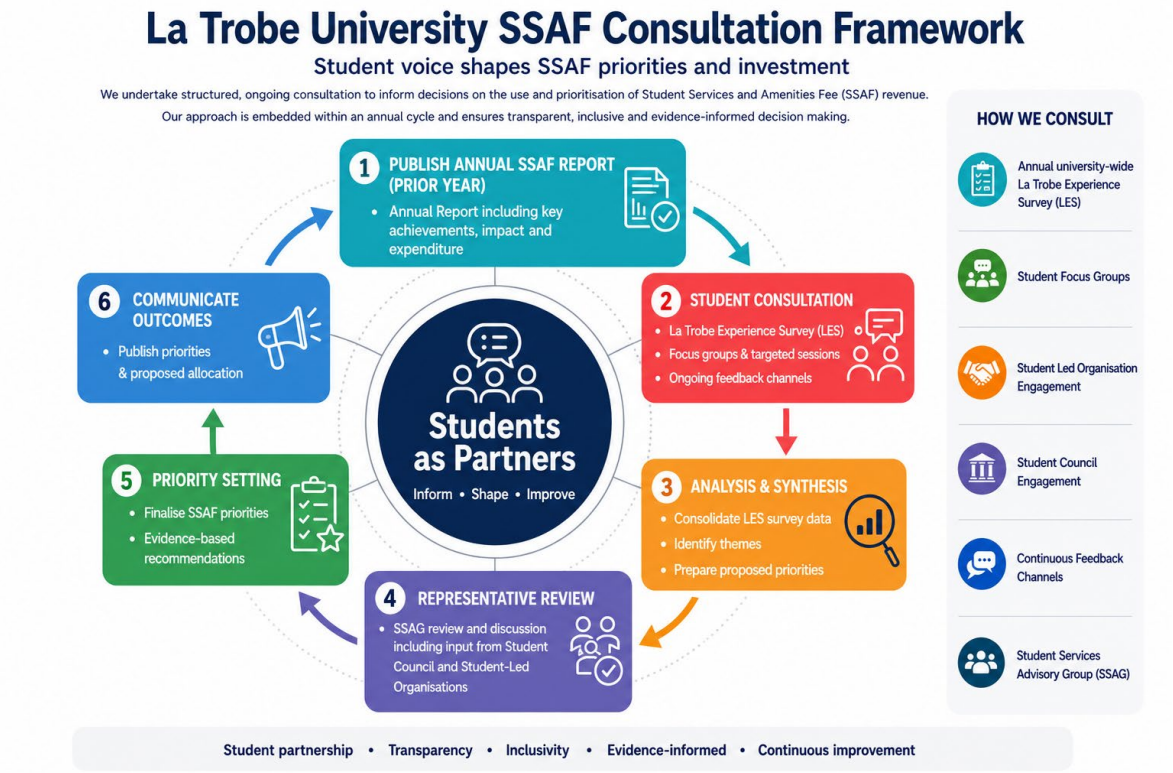
The Student Services Advisory Group (SSAG) provides a structured forum for elected student representatives from recognised student-led organisations and Student Council, together with relevant University stakeholders, to:

- provide feedback on services and activities funded by SSAF in the current year to contribute to continuous quality improvement,
- seek and share feedback from students in regard to proposed SSAF priorities for the coming year, and
- identify emerging needs across campuses and cohorts.

The SSAG supports transparent and accountable decision-making by consolidating input, testing priorities, and ensuring student perspectives are represented in the setting of expenditure priorities.

PUBLICATION OF SSAF PRIORITIES AND ALLOCATION

Following consultation, the University publishes information on SSAF priorities and proposed allocation for the forthcoming year. The University's annual SSAF report, prepared for the government, is also made publicly available as soon as practical following finalisation and approval.



ANNUAL TIMELINE FOR SSAF CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES

The indicative **annual timeline for SSAF consultation activities** provides a structured overview of key milestones and processes that support effective consultation around SSAF. Each activity ensures alignment with legislative requirements, institutional goals and student priorities, fostering transparency and accountability throughout the year.

Month	Activity	Overview
March	Launch of SSAF communications campaigns	Communication campaigns are launched to actively raise awareness of SSAF and the services and amenities that it funds. Campaigns leverage online platforms, email communications, and in-person forums to maximise participation.
April	La Trobe and recognised SLO Governance Panel (quarterly meetings)	Discussions between La Trobe and recognised SLO representatives to discuss SSAF funded initiatives.
April	Annual La Trobe Experience Survey (SSAF survey incorporated into broader La Trobe Experience Survey)	The SSAF specific survey questions are integrated into the broader La Trobe Experience Survey. This provides a dual benefit of gaining actionable insights into student satisfaction and priorities while reducing survey fatigue by consolidating multiple feedback mechanisms.
April	Student Services Advisory Group	Representatives from recognised SLOs and the University review and discuss consolidated student

		feedback on SSAF awareness and service experiences.
May	Open Student Forum (hosted by the Student Council)	Student Council members host open listening sessions to gather broad perspectives on SSAF awareness, priorities, service satisfaction and emerging issues.
June	La Trobe and recognised SLO Governance Panel (quarterly meetings)	Discussions between La Trobe and recognised SLO representatives to discuss SSAF funded initiatives.
May	Facilitated SSAF Focus Groups	Student Voice and Partnerships conduct structured focus groups to support in-depth consultation on SSAF awareness, service experiences and priorities for future funding. These sessions enable deep discussion and produce actionable insights to inform SSAF planning and decision-making.
June	Publication of previous years SSAF outcomes	The University publishes detailed report on the previous year's SSAF expenditure and program performance.
Early August	Open Student Forum (hosted by the Student Council)	Student Council members host open listening sessions to revisit and gather broad perspectives on SSAF awareness, service satisfaction, priorities and emerging issues. This is informed by insights from earlier listening sessions and LES survey results.
Early August	Facilitated SSAF Focus Groups	Student Voice and Partnerships conduct structured focus groups to revisit and support in-depth consultation on SSAF awareness, service experiences and priorities for future funding. These sessions, informed by LES data, enable deep discussion and produce actionable insights to inform SSAF planning and decision-making
August	Student Services Advisory Group	Representatives from recognised SLOs and the University review and discuss consolidated student feedback on SSAF awareness, service experiences and proposed priorities for SSAF allocation.
September	Student Support Sub Committee	Receives the SSAF feedback and endorses priorities, proposed budget allocation and SSAF Consultation Framework.
September	La Trobe and recognised SLO Governance Panel (quarterly meetings)	Discussions between La Trobe and recognised SLO representatives to discuss SSAF funded initiatives.

December	La Trobe and recognised SLO Governance Panel (quarterly meetings)	Discussions between La Trobe and recognised SLO representatives to discuss SSAF funded initiatives.