

**STUDENT CONSULTATION REPORT – DRAFT 1
2018**

STUDENT SERVICES & AMENITIES FEE (SSAF):

Student Consultation Report

ENQUIRIES

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Executive Summary

In 2011 La Trobe University (LTU) introduced the Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF), since then LTU has undertaken extensive, annual consultation with students to identify key priority areas for expenditure in the delivery of services and amenities for our students.

In 2018 students were invited to partake in the online Student Census Survey that achieved a total of 5478 responses (confidence level of 95% +/- 1.20%). Students were asked to apportion significance to, and prioritise areas of SSAF spending. In response to this, students identified the following top five (5) priorities:

1. Health and Welfare
2. Study Skills
3. Employment Support
4. Food and Drink
5. Non- academic libraries

The Annual SSAF Survey provides feedback and delivers a source of information that will continue to determine priorities for SSAF funding each year, the survey results will complement other consultation processes with students and assist in identifying student priorities and informing future SSAF spending.

Background

Introduced in 2011, the Australian Parliament passed legislation enabling universities and other higher education providers to charge a fee for student services and amenities of a non-academic nature.

SSAF can only be used to fund services and amenities that are outlined by the Australian government. Funds from SSAF help to improve the Student experience at La Trobe. You may use all or some of the services and amenities that the fee provides.

Since the introduction of SSAF, funding has enabled a significant number of improvements to services, facilities and amenities used by Students across all La Trobe University, Victorian campuses.

The legislation outlines the requirements for the University to consult with students, (including democratically elected student representatives) on how revenue from the fee is allocated and spent:

“Higher Education Providers (HEP’s) must establish and maintain a clearly defined and effective process by which students enrolled at the HEP are consulted that is reviewed and approved annually by the governing body of that HEP after being made available to the students enrolled at the HEP for comment”.

La Trobe University is committed to ensuring the consultation with students is genuine, and that the student voice is considered when determining how revenue raised from the compulsory SSAF is spent. As a key part of the consultation process, LTU formed the Student Services Advisory Group (SSAG), which consists of University representatives and student representatives nominated by the four student organisations; Bendigo Student Association (BSA), Wodonga Student Association (WSA) and La Trobe Student Union (LTSU) including; Mildura Student Association (MSA), Shepparton Student Association (SSA) and International Students Association (ISA)

Reporting to the Vice President (Administration) SSAG acts as an advisory body for all items concerning SSAF, managing the process for ongoing consultation and budget allocations. SSAG meet at least four times a year to plan and review consultation methodology as well as proposing budget allocations.

2018 Consultation Process

Each year, La Trobe University review and update the Terms of Reference and membership of SSAG. The Secretariat of SSAG will, in conjunction with the Executive Director, Student Services and Administration, review the student consultation process from the previous year and propose process improvements, based on the efficacy of previous consultation processes and strategies.

In 2018 the consultation methodologies were submitted to the University Council in the form of a report. The guidelines were collectively reviewed and approved by the University Council in February 2018.

During the development phase of the coming year's strategy, the proposed consultation processes are submitted to SSAG for endorsement before presenting to the Vice President Administration, for submission and final approval to La Trobe University Council.

FOUNDATION OF LA TROBE UNIVERSITY'S SSAF CONSULTATION FOR 2018:

Review:

- SSAF allocation and associated consultation methodologies to identify areas of improvement.
- Recommend improvements to strengthen governance, consultation, engagement and compliance.
- Key findings from the previous student consultation survey, capital planning and the allocation of funds with Student Services Advisory Group (SSAG).
- Outputs and delivery of SSAF funded projects.

Consult (with):

- Student Organisations and SSAG members; formally at a minimum of 4 meetings per year (or more frequently if required)
- the Vice President (Administration) and advise on all SSAF recommendations resulting from SSAG member and student consultations.
- University Council to advise and seek approval of the student consultation process.
- enrolled students to measure current awareness, satisfaction and to identify key spending priorities, ensuring SSAF funding allocations are responsive to student needs

Update:

- Previous SSAF Student Consultation Survey methodologies based on review and consultation.
- SSAF website to increase overall accessibility and usability and to better inform and engage students on SSAF.

Circulate:

- Annual Consultation Report and appendices online, encouraging additional feedback on key findings and recommendations.
- SSAF Financial Allocation Report and Budget online annually (by end February). The Report includes successful submissions from incorporated student organisations and other university service providers operating and capital works proposals or strategic projects that are compliant with SSAF legislation.
- Information on SSAF related developments and projects in the 'Weekly student update' email to raise continuing awareness including SSAF channels of contact to encourage students to provide feedback and share their insights concerning SSAF. (Something about Website here)

2018 Census Survey

Response & Engagement

The survey generated 5478 completed responses. This number of responses provides an overall confidence level of 95% +/- 1.20%. In terms of campus breakdowns, the largest responses were generated by Bundoora (Melbourne) (70%) and Bendigo (20%). Full time students contributed the largest response (79%) for study load, undergraduate (79%) for degree level and 20-24 (42%) for age range. Appendices 4 and 5 provide more detail on responses by demographic and campus.

	2016	2017	2018
Total completed responses	4084	4721	5478
Verbatim Comments	2353	2648	2789
Confidence Level	95% +/- 1.4%	95% +/- 1.32%	95% +/- 1.20%
Study Load			
Full Time	85%	86%	83%
Part Time	15%	14%	17%
Degree Level			
Undergraduate	76%	78%	80%
Postgraduate (Coursework)	24%	22%	20%

Table 1. Response rates and high-level demographics 2016 and 2017

Key Findings – Spending Priorities

In 2018, students were presented with 14 areas of allowable spending, Appendix 3 illustrates the categories and logic of grouping key spending areas from 19 to 14.

SSAF Allocation - Importance

Through apportioning importance across the 14 categories, student responses identified the top 5 priority areas for funding. The top spending priorities remain the same as 2016 and 2017, with a slight reorder of preference between *Study Skills*, *Employment Support* and *Food & Drink*.

Importance Results						
Rank	2018	Mean (1 to 3)	2017	Mean (1 to 3)	2016	Mean (1 to 3)
1	Health & welfare	2.85 (-)	Health & welfare	2.85	Health & welfare	2.54
2	Study skills	2.79 (+0.02)	Employment support	2.79	Employment support	2.4
3	Employment support	2.78 (-0.01)	Study skills	2.77	Food & drink	2.39
4	Food & drink	2.75 (-0.02)	Food & drink	2.77	Study skills	2.38
5	Non-academic libraries	2.71 (+0.03)	Non-academic libraries	2.68	Non-academic libraries	2.21

Table 2. Top 5 areas of importance

When rating the importance of services and amenities it is possible that many students are not fully considering the value that is currently provided. The ongoing communication and engagement around SSAF is necessary if informed input is to be gained from students.

SSAF Allocation - Satisfaction

For the most part the top 5 reported as most important are also areas of greater satisfaction with the exception to Non-academic libraries (student recreational/multipurpose space), resulting in high levels of importance, but lacking in overall satisfaction.

Appendix 5 provides greater detail of student responses by key demographics and campus.

Satisfaction Results						
Rank	2018	Mean (1 to 3)	2017	Mean (1 to 3)	2016	Mean (1 to 3)
1	Orientation information	2.71 (+0.04)	Orientation information	2.67	Orientation information	2.71
2	Health & welfare	2.67 (+0.02)	Health & welfare	2.65	Food & drink	2.67
3	Study skills	2.64 (+0.04)	Study skills	2.6	Health & welfare	2.65
4	Advice & advocacy	2.63 (-0.05)	Advice & advocacy	2.58	Study skills	2.63
5	Food & drink	2.59 (+0.06)	Food & drink	2.53	Advice & advocacy	2.62

Table 3. Top 5 areas of satisfaction

Campus Specific – Priorities for Improvement

Students were presented with campus specific information and questions regarding their satisfaction and priorities for improvements, the following are key themes of improvement summarised using qualitative and/or qualitative responses.

ALBURY-WODONGA	MELBOURNE (BUNDOORA)
Hanger facilities and services	Food-based events
Food pantry and free food activities	Events and activities
Diary and wall planner	Student lounges
BENDIGO	MILDURA
Events and entertainment	Student facilities
Clubs and societies	Student support services
BSA stock room	Student and campus events
CITY	SHEPPARTON
Student support services	Student facilities including kitchenette
Events and activities	Student support services
Marketing and promotions	Student and campus events, activities and campaigns

Table 4. Priorities for improvement (Campus Specific)

Student Engagement & Communication

Overall Understanding of SSAF

While the number students with a 'good understanding' of SSAF has increased, there still remains a majority of students with 'no' to 'some' understanding of SSAF purpose and allocation of funds.

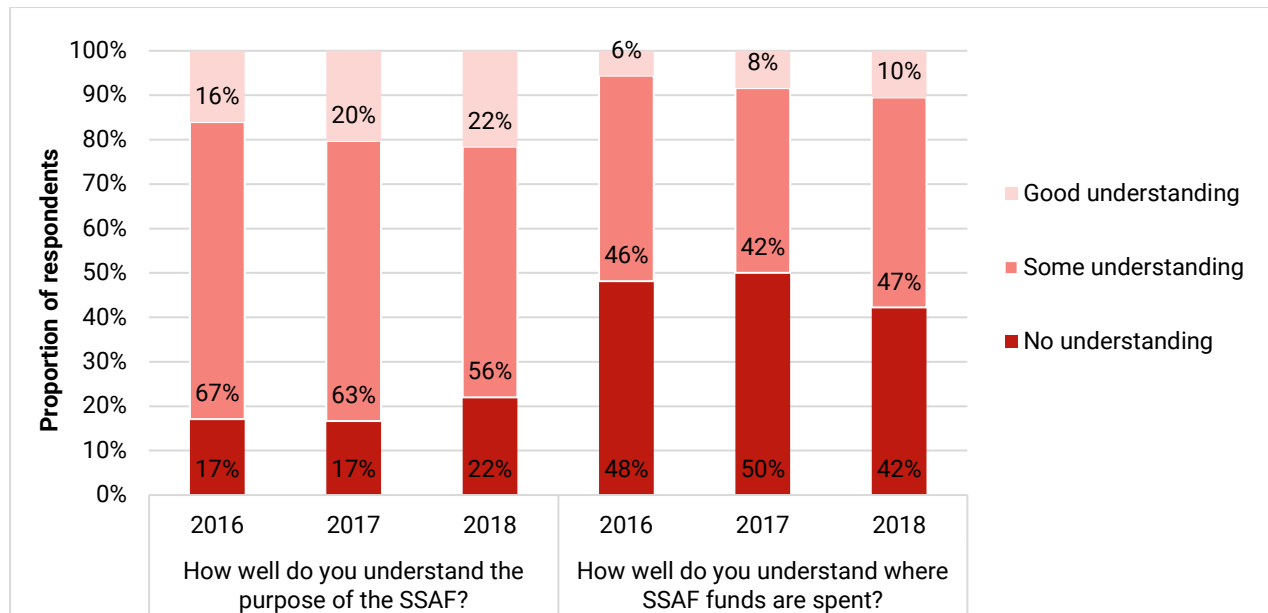


Figure 1. 2016/2017/2018 SSAF Survey comparison - Students rating of their understanding of the purpose of SSAF and of where SSAF funds are spent.

Preferred Method of Communication

Preference of how to share information and send correspondence regarding SSAF was surveyed, resulting in the top 3 preferences of; email, posters and then Facebook.

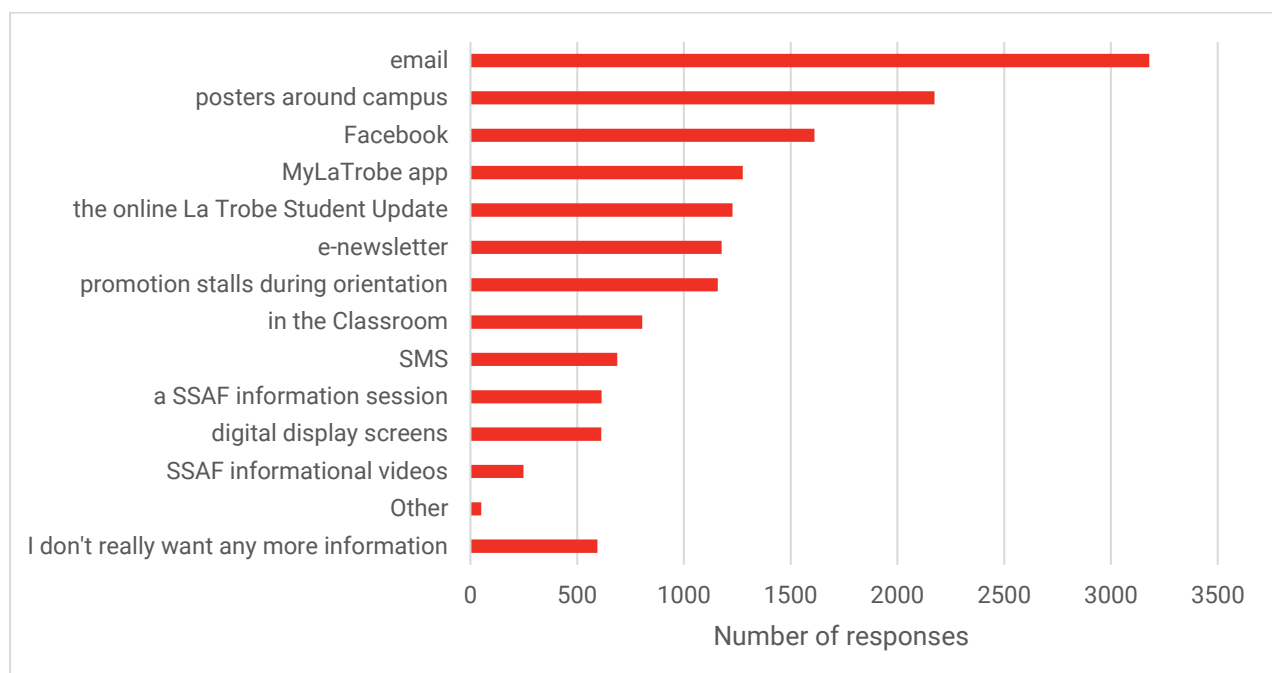


Figure 2. Students preferred method for receiving more information about SSAF

Those who selected “Other” above were prompted to describe how they would like to receive information about SSAF. While the numbers selecting this option were low, the types of responses are outlined in the table below.

THEMES	NUMBER OF RESPONSES ¹
LMS	8
Website	3
Booklet	2
Credits to SSAF for activities/services when advertising these	2
Post	2
Noticeboards	2
Email	2
Twitter	2
I would prefer to not hear anything if it's not relevant to me	2
Via a link when we pay on StudentOnline	1
Advertising in Youtube	1
Flyers	1
I would like to see action around food stall/ canteen and sleeping/recharge space!	1
Via Face to face means	1
La Trobe Student Union	1
Link to info	1
Linked in	1
Social Activity	1
Memes	1
Newsletter	1

Table 5. Summary of themes for ‘other’ preferred methods for receiving more information about SSAF.

¹ 42 responses in total with 7 N/A

Support for Funding Specific Areas

For the first time in 2018, LTU included questions regarding specific funding areas based on feedback received during the survey workshop.

Sport

Students were given the following question: “La Trobe University offer numerous sporting and recreational programs, some of these programs are supported by SSAF; please list the top three sports priority areas where SSAF should be distributed.”

The total number of responses for each option is presented in the figure below. Students had the option to select their top three. The highest rated was upgrading recreation facilities and amenity.

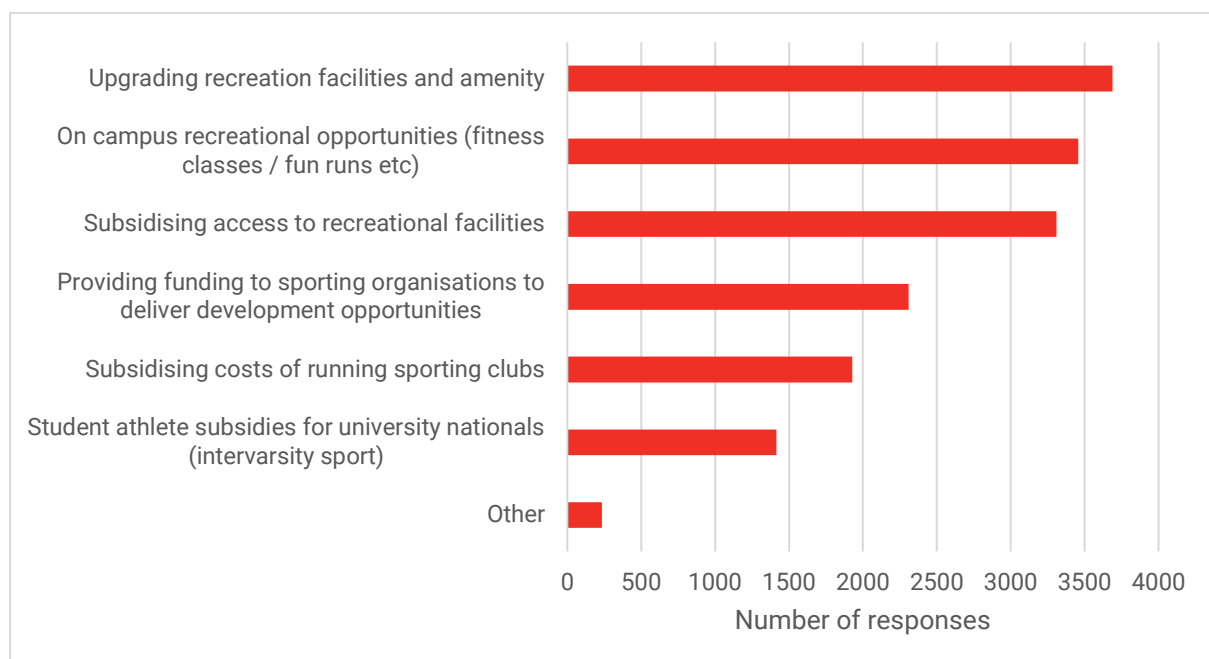


Figure 3. Students' support for sporting and recreational programs. Note that students could select up to three choices

Health and Wellbeing

Students were then asked about health and welfare services via the following question: “SSAF also supports numerous student health and welfare services; please list (in order of importance) the top three priority areas where SSAF should be utilised.”

As seen in Figure 4, individual counselling was the area with greatest support for additional funding, followed by Information resources on health and welfare issues.

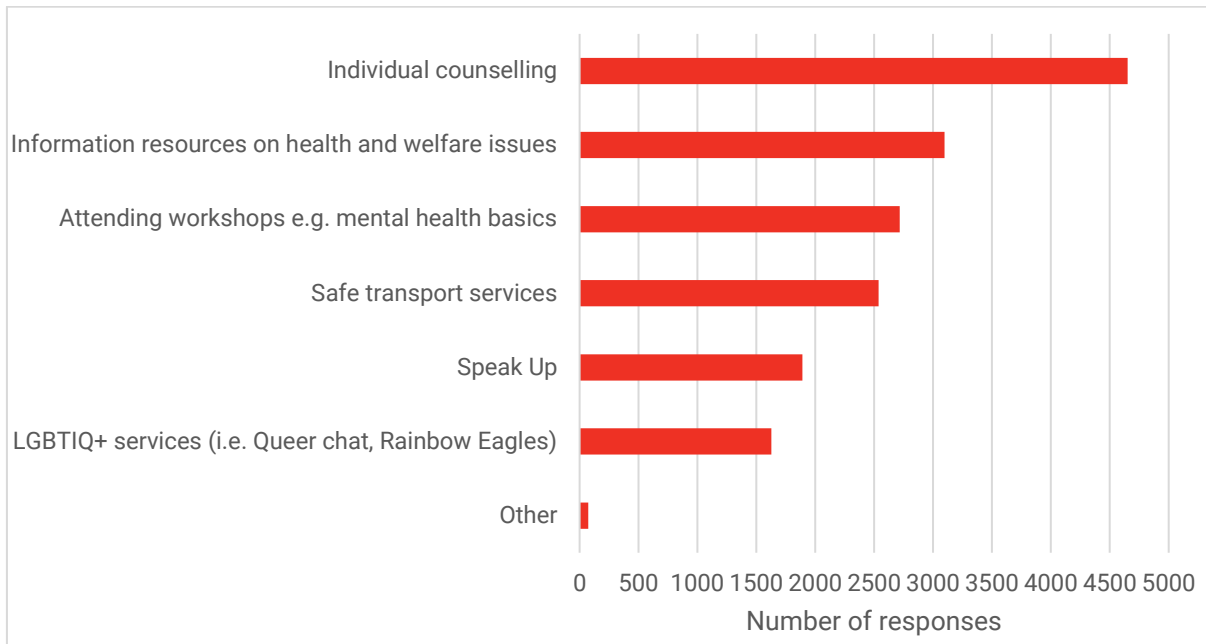


Figure 4. Students support for health and welfare services. Note that students could select up to three choices.

For those services listed above, students were also asked to indicate which student health and welfare services they had used. As seen below, the majority of students had not used any of the listed services. Individual counselling was the most commonly used service, reflecting the demand for funding shown above.

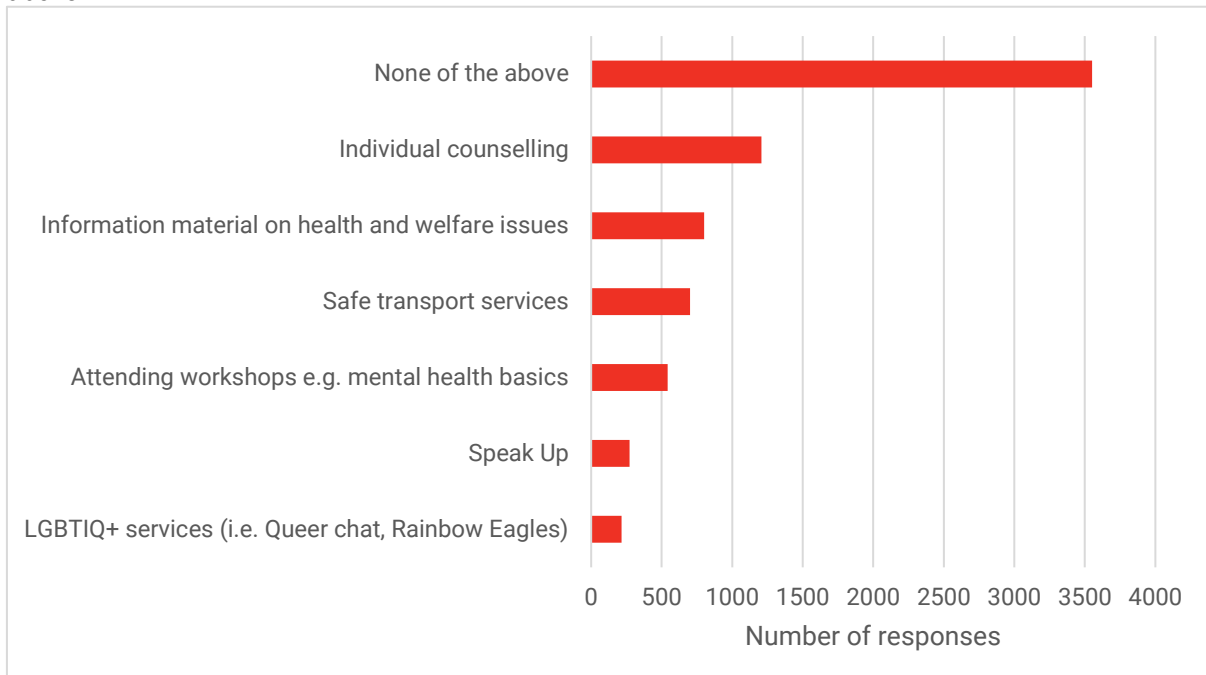


Figure 5. Students' support for health and welfare services. Note that students could select up to three choices.

Key Findings – Qualitative Data

Students were invited to provide open responses with the following question How can SSAF improve student support, student engagement or student experience (outside of classes)?

All verbatim responses were reviewed and collated into key themes. The analysis in this instance generated 8 key themes incorporating 2885 responses. (Excluding any responses classed as uncategoryed or No comment/not applicable).

The most common themes are listed below in Table 6 along with some examples of the types of suggestions for each. The number of responses to each of these categories in 2016 and 2017 is also shown. While there were less responses overall in 2016 and in 2017, a relative change can still be seen where there are large differences across the years. In 2018, there were less responses that mentioned Representation and Inclusiveness, Food, Facilities & Resources, and Spaces than in both previous years. There were also large increases in the number of responses for Promotion & Advertising and Activities & Events.

NUMBER OF RESPONSES:			MAJOR THEMES (MORE THAN 100 RESPONSES)
2018	2017	2016	
628	428	214	Activities and events – requesting more in general (most did not specify what kind of activities); Arts Activities/Spaces; and After-Hours Activities
618	597	512	Increasing Awareness - of services and SSAF funding and more awareness in general needed
516	470	287	Support Services – Provide more or improved services such as academic mentoring/support and employment assistance/industry networking opportunities
440	253	54	Promotion/Advertising (specific methods to improve awareness)
239	395	395	Spaces – Provide more or improved areas such as Study/Quiet Areas; Informal/Social/Lounge Spaces; and Outdoor Spaces
223	224	282	Facilities/Resources - including more facilities, maintenance, greater affordability and accessibility. Specific examples included parking, and food preparation areas.
119	218	217	Food - including better or more options, greater affordability, and healthier choices
102	171	166	Representation/Inclusiveness – of all students or specific groups such as International or Mature Age students

Table 6. Summary of verbatim Responses, identifying key themes

Note: a comment may contain multiple responses, a full list of themes and subthemes can be found in the full analysis report (Appendix 2)

Recommendations

Through the considered analysis of student responses, the following recommendations are proposed;

1. The 2019 SSAF budget allocations to be aligned with these priorities.
2. In consultation with student organisations, review consultation methodology, with consideration for a new survey tool that enables greater contemporary practice for 2019 and beyond.
3. Continued review of the student survey to improve student understanding and rate of response through consultation and feedback from key stakeholders including SSAG.
4. Outcomes of student consultation to be shared with key decision makers to better inform planning from the student perspective including but not limited to ICT, I&O and LTLT.
5. Continue to partner with the student Organisations to strengthen planning, reporting and overall approach of the administration and allocation of SSAF funding.
6. Review and implement a strategic communication plan to increase student consultation engagement, SSAF awareness.
7. Ensure reports of SSAF funding are advertised, easily accessible and easily legible for students on the SSAF website. – Including infographic (seeking input offline)

Appendices

1. 2017 Council Memo – Endorsed Consultation 2016 – 2015
2. 2018 SSAF Survey Results – Final Report

APPENDIX 3: GROUPING OF ALLOWABLE SPENDING AREAS.

Note the category 'Support overseas students welfare and other needs' as the allowable propvision of support and welfare services is sufficently covered in the other categories.

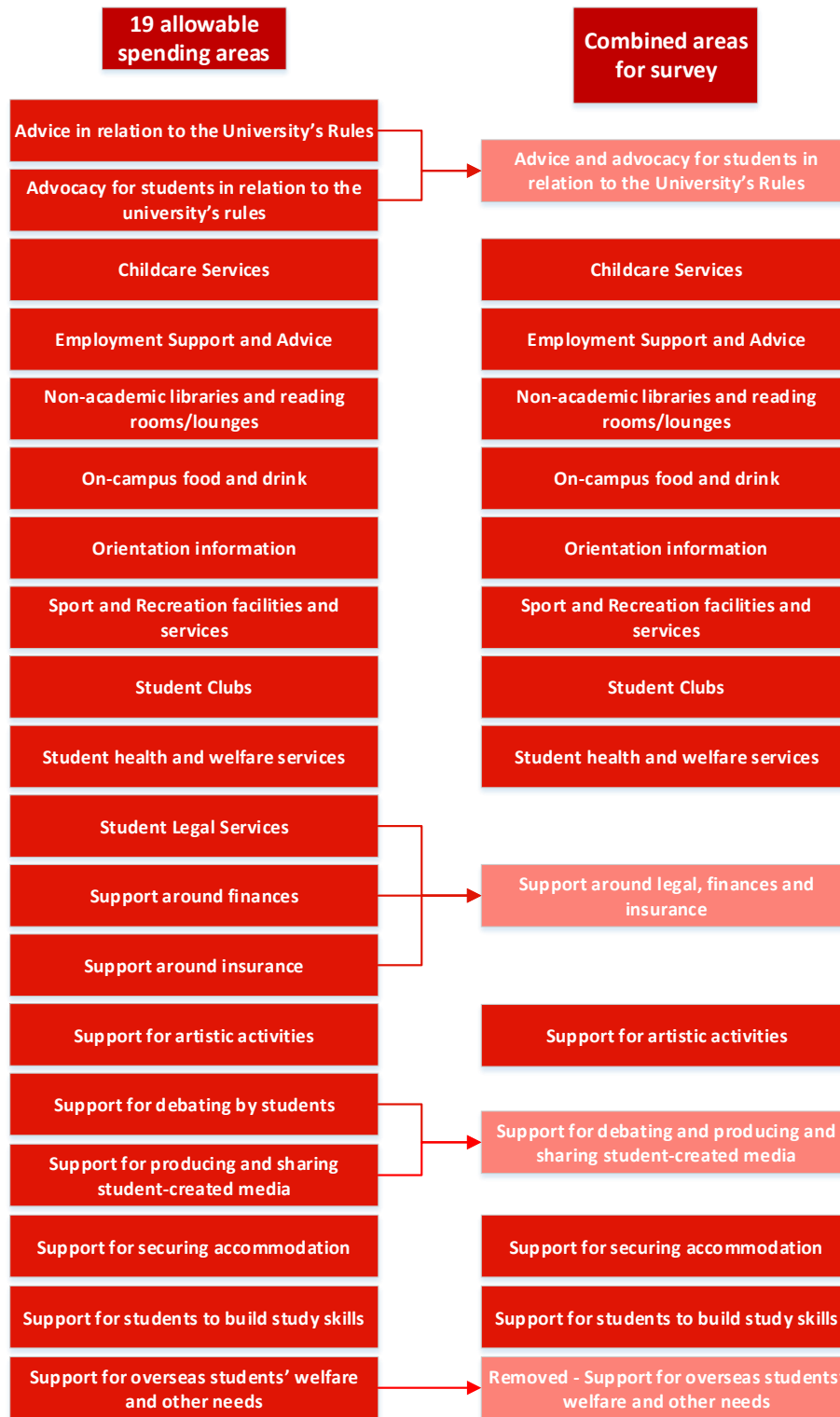


Figure 6. SSAF survey combined funding areas

APPENDIX 4: 2018 IMPORTANCE BY FUNDING AREA AND KEY DEMOGRAPHICS.

2018	Health & welfare	Study skills	Employment support	Food & drink	Non-academic libraries	Advice & advocacy	Legal, finances and insurance	Orientation information	Securing housing	Sport & recreation	Student clubs	Childcare services	Artistic activities	Debating and student media
Grand Total*	2.85	2.79	2.78	2.75	2.71	2.67	2.66	2.65	2.61	2.59	2.55	2.48	2.37	2.30
Albury-Wodonga	2.89	2.85	2.84	2.82	2.70	2.74	2.70	2.66	2.63	2.55	2.54	2.51	2.36	2.25
Bendigo	2.85	2.80	2.74	2.79	2.63	2.64	2.62	2.68	2.67	2.61	2.61	2.47	2.34	2.25
Bundoora	2.85	2.78	2.80	2.74	2.73	2.67	2.66	2.63	2.59	2.59	2.53	2.47	2.38	2.32
City	2.81	2.80	2.76	2.66	2.70	2.65	2.63	2.70	2.52	2.61	2.56	2.36	2.39	2.35
Mildura	2.88	2.86	2.75	2.80	2.70	2.72	2.70	2.81	2.72	2.44	2.52	2.70	2.35	2.32
Shepparton	2.82	2.85	2.81	2.74	2.67	2.71	2.60	2.79	2.60	2.54	2.44	2.46	2.29	2.21
<20	2.87	2.79	2.78	2.76	2.76	2.66	2.71	2.67	2.66	2.63	2.59	2.45	2.38	2.33
20-24	2.84	2.86	2.68	2.77	2.54	2.78	2.66	2.75	2.67	2.62	2.52	2.69	2.52	2.45
25-29	2.86	2.77	2.81	2.77	2.72	2.65	2.65	2.61	2.60	2.59	2.57	2.43	2.35	2.29
30-39	2.81	2.77	2.78	2.71	2.66	2.66	2.59	2.61	2.54	2.54	2.51	2.48	2.35	2.25
40-50	2.86	2.81	2.74	2.72	2.62	2.69	2.62	2.69	2.56	2.51	2.45	2.59	2.38	2.25
>50	2.81	2.84	2.68	2.70	2.64	2.72	2.58	2.74	2.54	2.53	2.45	2.59	2.38	2.30
Domestic	2.86	2.78	2.78	2.74	2.70	2.66	2.63	2.63	2.59	2.56	2.53	2.46	2.33	2.25
International	2.83	2.85	2.83	2.80	2.78	2.75	2.79	2.75	2.70	2.76	2.71	2.55	2.63	2.63
Postgraduate	2.83	2.81	2.76	2.72	2.65	2.70	2.62	2.69	2.57	2.59	2.55	2.50	2.42	2.33
Undergraduate	2.86	2.78	2.79	2.76	2.72	2.66	2.66	2.63	2.61	2.59	2.55	2.47	2.35	2.29

Table 6. Importance of funding areas by categories (1 = Not at all important, 2= somewhat important, 3= Important)

APPENDIX 5: 2018 SATISFACTION BY FUNDING AREA AND KEY DEMOGRAPHICS.

2018	Orientation information	Health & welfare	Study skills	Advice & advocacy	Food & drink	Securing housing	Student clubs	Sport & recreation	Legal, finances and insurance	Employment support	Non-academic libraries	Childcare services	Debating and student media	Artistic activities
Grand Total	2.71	2.67	2.64	2.63	2.59	2.55	2.55	2.53	2.52	2.44	2.42	2.40	2.39	2.37
Albury-Wodonga	2.76	2.62	2.66	2.61	2.57	2.53	2.28	2.18	2.41	2.48	2.66	2.32	2.11	2.08
Bendigo	2.75	2.73	2.67	2.64	2.57	2.61	2.55	2.46	2.53	2.44	2.49	2.33	2.29	2.27
Bundoora	2.70	2.65	2.64	2.64	2.61	2.56	2.58	2.60	2.52	2.44	2.37	2.44	2.44	2.41
City	2.66	2.51	2.63	2.64	2.33	2.30	2.48	2.34	2.61	2.17	2.62	2.31	2.37	2.38
Mildura	2.85	2.72	2.74	2.72	2.21	2.31	2.15	1.73	2.53	2.73	2.56	1.94	2.23	2.15
Shepparton	2.68	2.76	2.67	2.66	2.59	2.43	2.14	2.17	2.52	2.46	2.42	2.07	2.27	2.20
<20	2.75	2.70	2.68	2.68	2.69	2.66	2.59	2.59	2.55	2.49	2.48	2.48	2.48	2.43
20-24	2.60	2.67	2.69	2.66	2.53	2.39	2.56	2.64	2.66	2.63	2.51	2.33	2.38	2.54
25-29	2.71	2.65	2.62	2.62	2.58	2.55	2.54	2.51	2.53	2.41	2.37	2.46	2.36	2.34
30-39	2.66	2.69	2.60	2.60	2.46	2.37	2.49	2.44	2.50	2.33	2.35	2.30	2.37	2.25
40-50	2.70	2.61	2.60	2.55	2.47	2.26	2.46	2.42	2.37	2.44	2.45	2.11	2.26	2.30
>50	2.62	2.64	2.69	2.55	2.50	2.30	2.38	2.42	2.34	2.61	2.52	2.11	2.22	2.13
Domestic	2.70	2.66	2.64	2.63	2.59	2.53	2.52	2.51	2.49	2.46	2.39	2.33	2.34	2.31
International	2.76	2.70	2.64	2.67	2.55	2.61	2.63	2.57	2.60	2.34	2.60	2.53	2.56	2.52
Postgraduate	2.66	2.66	2.63	2.59	2.51	2.44	2.57	2.53	2.54	2.32	2.56	2.35	2.42	2.41
Undergraduate	2.73	2.67	2.64	2.64	2.60	2.58	2.54	2.52	2.51	2.46	2.39	2.40	2.38	2.34

Table 7. Satisfaction with funding areas (1 = Dissatisfied, 2 = neither, 3)