

# Southern Cross University

## Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF)

### 2025 Allocation Report

## Introduction

The *Higher Education Support (Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy) Guidelines 2022* (SSARA Guidelines) 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.

The information provided in this *SSAF Allocation Report* does **not** require auditing by a financial accountant. The SSAF expenditure reporting is a separate process and 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.

## SSAF Consultation and Achievements

The University's guidelines for requesting SSAF funds provide a robust request, monitoring, and reporting process for the allocation of these funds (see Appendix 1). The aim is to ensure alignment with the University Strategy and the priorities identified by our students in each annual SSAF Survey, with a focus on improving student engagement to support student success and retention. Students are consulted annually on SSAF funding priorities and their feedback on services and activities supported through SSAF, via the annual (mid-year) SSAF survey. Insights gathered from this survey, consultation with student associations, the Student Experience Committee and student representatives directly inform the allocation of SSAF funds for the following year. Survey outcomes are made available to all students through the SCU SSAF webpage and are also shared with key internal stakeholders. In addition to the SSAF survey, the university employs a range of supplementary student consultation methods, as outlined below, to ensure ongoing student input into SSAF-related planning and decision-making.

### **Council and Academic Board**

Students are elected to positions on Council and the principal academic decision-making body of the University, Academic Board. These bodies both meet at regular intervals throughout the year.

Students are also elected or appointed to the following Academic Board committees:

- Faculty Boards – provides advice on to Academic Board on academic initiatives and innovations and oversees the quality of academic matters within each Faculty or College.
- Academic Standards and Quality Committee – principal advisory committee to Academic Board on issues relating to academic standards and quality for curriculum delivery.
- Academic Board Appeals Committee – determines student academic appeals.
- Research Committee – principal advisory committee to Academic Board on issues of research across the University.
- Student Academic Experience Committee – principal advisory committee to Academic Board on issues relating to the student academic experience.

### **Student Experience Committee**

The purpose of the Student Experience Steering Committee is to provide consultation and engagement on University initiatives, services and activities to improve student experience, safety and wellbeing.

### **Student Voice Committee**

Established to determine methods to increase student feedback on academic/unit and teaching experience.

### **Student Associations (managed by elected student representatives)**

Regular consultation meetings are conducted with the independent Student Associations through scheduled Association Forums. Student Association executives are appointed through annual student elections.

### **Surveys, feedback and advocacy mechanisms**

All enrolled students:

- have access to the Student Advocacy Service
- have the opportunity to provide feedback to the university about their student experience at any time through an online mechanism.
- have the opportunity to provide feedback in regard to unit offerings and teaching through end of Unit surveys.
- can email SCU Assist for support and advice or to provide feedback.
- Pre and post feedback for Orientation and training program participants
- Check-in survey for students at Census date
- Support Service satisfaction survey and client feedback

- Establishment of Student Experience Committee (combining the Student Safety and Student Representative Committees) Student Association -Forum (3 per year, all Student Associations shared plan updates, innovation and student engagement, successes)
- Point of transaction satisfaction surveys (administrative and support processes)

## ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2025, Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) funding supported the establishment of two key student support initiatives that were identified as a gap: the Student Financial Advisory Service and the Student Legal Service hosted by Lismore & External Student Association. These services were introduced as pilot programs to strengthen student wellbeing, improve access to professional advice, and address increasing financial and legal challenges experienced by students.

The Student Financial Advisory Service provided students with access to qualified financial advisors, offering support in areas such as budgeting, debt management, and financial literacy. In addition to one-on-one consultations, the service delivered a series of workshops focused on practical financial skills, including managing cost-of-living pressures, understanding credit and debt, and financial planning. These workshops aimed to build financial capability at scale and proactively support students before issues escalate.

The Student Legal Service was established to provide students with free or low-cost legal advice and assistance. During 2025 the service supported students in navigating a range of issues, including tenancy, employment, and personal legal matters. In addition to appointments, the service also delivered legal information workshops, covering topics such as tenant rights, employment obligations, and understanding legal processes, improving student awareness and early intervention.

In 2025, students identified the below 5 top priorities for SSAF spend via the annual student SSAF survey. The achievements in improving services across these priority areas are outlined below.

1. Helping students obtain employment or career advice upon graduation
2. Helping students obtain employment while studying at SCU
3. Promoting health and Welfare of students
4. Providing food and drink on campus
5. Helping students with their financial affairs

Careers and Employability services experienced significant growth in 2025, with total engagement increasing from 8,541 participants in 2024 to 15,395 in 2025—an approximate 80% year-on-year increase. This strong uplift reflects both the expanded reach of services and increased student participation in career development initiatives. Student satisfaction with the 2,121 individual career consultations remained consistently high, with an average rating of 6.7 out of 7, demonstrating the strong value of personalised, one-on-one support. In addition, the team delivered 235 workshops with 6,046 participants, further highlighting the breadth of service delivery and sustained student demand for employability-focused programming.

In 2025, food and beverage initiatives delivered by Southern Cross University's student associations (LEXSA, CHSA, and CoastRs) represented a significant achievement under SSAF priorities relating to student welfare, equity, and campus engagement. Across all campuses, food programs were among the most highly utilised and valued services, demonstrating strong impact in supporting student wellbeing and participation.

Collectively, student associations delivered a comprehensive range of food services, including weekly meal programs, subsidised food vouchers, food pantries, event catering, and daily food offerings. These initiatives ensured students had consistent access to affordable and, in many cases, free food options throughout the academic year and promote engagement and belonging.

Demand for food services was exceptionally high across all campuses. Programs reached several hundred students weekly, with CoastRs alone engaging between 500–1000 students per week through catering initiatives. Similarly, LEXSA's structured weekly food program and CHSA's expanded sustenance services saw strong and increasing participation, with many offerings regularly reaching capacity or being fully utilised.

Food initiatives played a critical role in alleviating cost-of-living pressures for students, particularly those balancing study, employment, and personal commitments. Student feedback consistently highlighted the importance of these services in reducing financial stress, supporting daily study participation, and enhancing overall wellbeing. In addition, food programs contributed significantly to student engagement by creating informal, welcoming environments that encouraged social connection and fostered a sense of belonging on campus.

The success of these programs was further reflected in high satisfaction levels reported through student feedback and SSAF surveys, with food services consistently identified as a priority area for continued investment. In response to demand, associations expanded service offerings during the year; however, utilisation levels often exceeded available resources, indicating ongoing unmet demand.

In 2025, Counselling Services progressed key priorities to strengthen a responsive and student-centred service model, including the partial implementation of intake and screening processes, review of service delivery models, and integration of student safety and Riskware responses into practice.

Targeted service enhancements included delivery of a pilot ADHD group program and completion of staff training in neurodiversity, supporting improved capability to respond to priority student cohorts.

Counselling contributed to University-wide wellbeing initiatives, including RUOK? Day and Mental Health Month and commenced targeted engagement activities for specific cohorts such as students in accommodation and on placement.

A key component of service delivery was the provision of a 24/7 crisis counselling line, ensuring continuous access to immediate support outside of standard operating hours. This service is a critical element of the University's SSAF-funded support framework, enhancing student safety and providing equitable access to care for all students, regardless of location or time of need.

## SSAF Revenue Summary

	[2025] Allocation \$ <sup>1</sup>	2025] Actual \$
SSAF Revenue	\$3,750,000	\$4,552,102
SSAF revenue carried forward from 2024	\$1,670,403	\$1,670,403
<b>Total SSAF funds available for 2025</b>	<b>\$5,420,403</b>	<b>\$6,222,505</b>
SSAF revenue carried over into 2026	\$N/A	\$1,670,404

<sup>1</sup> Allocation refers to the SSAF funds expected to be received in the reported year (i.e., budgeted SSAF revenue).

## 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* (the Act). In 2025 the maximum SSAF was **\$364.80**.

Student Status	2025 SSAF charged \$ <sup>2</sup>	Number of students charged in 2025 <sup>3</sup>
Full-time <sup>1</sup> (> 0.75 EFTSL)	\$3,292,736	9702
Part-time <sup>1</sup> (< 0.75 EFTSL)	\$1,259,366	9494
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>19,196</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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" means 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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 [insert reported year]. 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 [insert reported year] as the total EFTSL they undertook in [insert reported year] was equal to 0.875.

Student Status	[2025] SSAF charged \$ <sup>2</sup>	Approx. number of SSAF students remote learning [2025] <sup>4</sup>
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Remote learning/Online only	\$1,864,128	8575
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<sup>4</sup> Note: The Department of Education 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.

## SSAF Allocation Summary

### Key areas of expenditure 2025

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 (reporting against these are mandatory)	[Year] Total Allocation \$	[Year] Total Actual Spend \$	Are services available online?	Estimated No. of students accessing services
1. Health Services	\$655,835	\$611,372	yes	16551
2. Clubs or other associations	\$1,284,505.50	\$1,058,509.53	yes	13508
a. Sporting	\$2,700	\$1,900	Yes	100
b. Internal student politics	\$0	\$0	n/a	n/a
c. Gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, or nationality-based	\$2,907.27	\$3,320.16	yes	350
d. Areas-of-study related e.g. law	\$2,471,.23	\$2,381.72	yes	400
e. Other activities e.g. music, debate, chess	\$750	\$599.64	yes	35
f. Other- Caring for Children	\$51,200	\$51,200	yes	108
3. Accommodation	\$0	\$11601	yes	1200
4. Employment/career services	\$642,149.00	\$641,754.80	yes	15395
5. Legal aid	\$220,000	\$181,254.55	yes	300
6. Support for financial affairs	\$71,000	\$63,740	yes	452
7. Other student amenities	\$120,000	\$178,231	No	
8. Other - please provide description	\$	\$		
9. Orientation	\$372,838	\$337,609.90	Yes	7100
10. b. Developing Skills for study	\$285,249	\$241,185.60	yes	4056

11 Specific needs of over seas students (relating to welfare, accommodation and employment)	\$38,000	\$209,116.50	No	510
11. Sporting & Recreation Activities	\$465,833	\$419,180.20	yes	3647
12. Food & Drink	\$273,700	\$263,640	yes	15375
13. Advocating students' interests in matters arising under the higher education provider's rules	\$275,504	\$275,504	yes	1325
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,764,692</b>	<b>\$4,552,101</b>		

Organisations, bodies or third-party providers that received SSAF funding in [2025]

**1. Allocation of SSAF revenue – non-student-led organisations**

Organisation Name <sup>1</sup>	Australian Business Number (ABN)	Supported Key Area	Total SSAF Funding Received from provider \$	% of total SSAF revenue collected by the Provider
Lifeline	84 081 031 263	1	\$65 000	1.43%
<b>Total SSAF provided to non student-led organisations</b>			\$65, 000	1.43%

**2. Allocation of SSAF revenue to student led organisations – evidence of meeting requirement of 40 per cent**

Student-led organisations will benefit from a consistent and predictable stream of SSAF revenue as they can plan and commit for long-term student support services, which will support students to succeed in their studies.

The student-led organisations receiving a proportion of the 40 percent SSAF funding for 2024-2025 are below:

- Lismore & External Student Association
- Coastrs
- Southern Cross Postgraduate Association
- Coffs Harbour Student Association

<sup>1</sup> Note: Only organisations, bodies or third-party providers who receive over \$1,000 in SSAF funding are expected to be disclosed.

Organisation Name <sup>2</sup>	Australian Business Number (ABN)	Supported Key Area	SSAF Funding Received from Provider \$	% of total revenue collected by the provider	If below 40 per cent, is there an agreed transition plan in place	Details of transition plan
Lismore & External Student Association (LEXSA)	79 216 280 715	1,2, 2a,c,d,e,f,8e	\$413,701	9.09%	N/A	N/A
Lismore & External Student Association (LEXSA) Student Financial Advisory Service	79 216 280 715	6	\$66,000	1.45%	N/A	N/A
Lismore & External Student Association (LEXSA) Student Legal Advisory Service	79 216 280 715	5	\$220,000	4.83%	N/A	N/A
Lismore & External Student Association (LEXSA) Advocacy Service	79 216 280 715	8f	\$275,504	6.05%	Y/N	N/A
Coasters – Gold Coast Student Association	47 919 544 221	1,2, 2a,c,d,e,f,8e	\$389,372	8.55%	N/A	N/A
Southern Cross Postgraduate Association	91 233 499 176	1,2, 4,6,8b	\$293,633	6.45%	N/A	N/A
Coffs Harbour Student Association	44 732 282 288	1,2, 2a,c,d,e,f,8e	\$253,800	5.6%	N/A	N/A
		<b>Total SSAF provided to student-led organisations</b>	<b>\$1,912,010</b>	<b>42.02%</b>		

<sup>2</sup> Note: Only organisations, bodies or third-party providers who receive over \$1,000 in SSAF funding are expected to be disclosed.

3. Attestation that student led organisations in receipt of a minimum of 40 per cent of SSAF revenue are meeting governance requirements

Organisation Name <sup>1</sup>	Majority student-led	Democratically elected leaders	Independence	Audited accounts	Corporate Governance policies and procedures established and adhered to	If replying no on any measure, is there an agreed transition plan in place?	Details of transition plan
Lismore & External Student Association (LEXSA)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A
Coastrs – Gold Coast Student Association	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A
Southern Cross Postgraduate Association	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A
Coffs Harbour Student Association	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A

## Declaration by Person of Authority

[The signoff should be at a Chief Executive level, or the senior responsible officer for administration of SSAF.]

I, Brendon Nelson Vice President Students & Registrar of Southern Cross University education provider, 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.

I further attest that the information provided in this Report meets the requirements of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* and the Higher Education Support (Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy) Guidelines 2022 and that, where transition arrangements have either been sought or approved, information is provided on this.



Signature of Person making Declaration

Brendon Nelson

Full name of Person making Declaration

VP (Students) and Registrar

Position of Person making Declaration

09/06/2026

Date