



JAMES COOK  
UNIVERSITY  
AUSTRALIA

# 2023 SSAF Survey Report



Supported by your  
**SSA Fee**  
Building a better student experience  
*Make Life Matter*

[jcu.edu.au](http://jcu.edu.au)

## BACKGROUND

In October 2011, the Government passed legislation (Guidelines) allowing universities to charge a fee for student services and amenities (SSAF) of a non-academic nature from January 2012. All JCU students are required to pay this fee (except for a small number of exempt students). The SSAF legislation permits nineteen (19) allowable categories of expenditure and outlines the requirements for JCU to consult with students.

JCU actively seeks to consult with, and obtain feedback from, its students in determining priorities for SSAF funding, engaging in a range of consultation processes with students including:

- Establishment and annual meetings of SSAF Income Allocation Working Group, consisting of membership across both JCU and the JCU Student Association;
- Biennial consultation with the broader student body through the SSAF Survey;
- Attendance of the Vice Chancellor appointed nominee (Deputy Vice Chancellor Education) at JCU Student Association Council Meetings;
- Regular scheduled meetings between the Deputy Vice Chancellor Education (or nominee) and JCU Student Association President;
- Regular meetings between JCU Student Association and Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor Education;
- Annual JCU Student Association induction on SSAF process with incoming JCUSA Council members;
- Feedback from Student Forums and Student Consultative Committees.

The 2023 SSAF survey is part of ongoing student consultation processes used to inform and determine priorities for SSAF funding in 2024.

## METHODOLOGY

The Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor Education drafted and administered the online 2023 SSAF Survey. The SSAF Survey was open for two (2) weeks from 31 July to 14 August 2023. Every student eligible to pay SSAF received an email inviting them to complete the Survey.

As an incentive for students, those who completed the Survey automatically went into the draw to win one of ten (10) \$50 Coles-Myer gift vouchers. The Survey completion time was estimated to take around three (3) minutes.

The Survey presented the 19 allowable categories and asked respondents to specify the level of importance of each category, on a 5-point scale from “Not at all Important” to “Extremely Important”. The Survey could not be completed unless all 19 categories had a response. The responses were aggregated, and categories ranked using R package “likert” (version 1.3.5) with R version “R-4.1.0” software environment for statistical computing and graphics.

Students also had the opportunity to leave feedback at the end of the Survey via three (3) optional questions.

## COMMUNICATION

The SSAF Survey was promoted through the following channels:

- Email to all students in JCU Australia (except JCUB and JCUS)
- JCU Students Facebook page
- Student Bulletins

---

### Our commitment to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

James Cook University is committed to building strong and mutually beneficial partnerships that work towards closing the employment, health and education gap for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Our students come from many backgrounds, promoting rich cultural and experiential diversity on campus.

*We acknowledge the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters where we operate our business. We honour the unique cultural and spiritual relationship to the land, waters and seas of First Australian peoples and their continuing and rich contribution to JCU and Australian society. We also pay respect to ancestors and Elders past, present and future.*



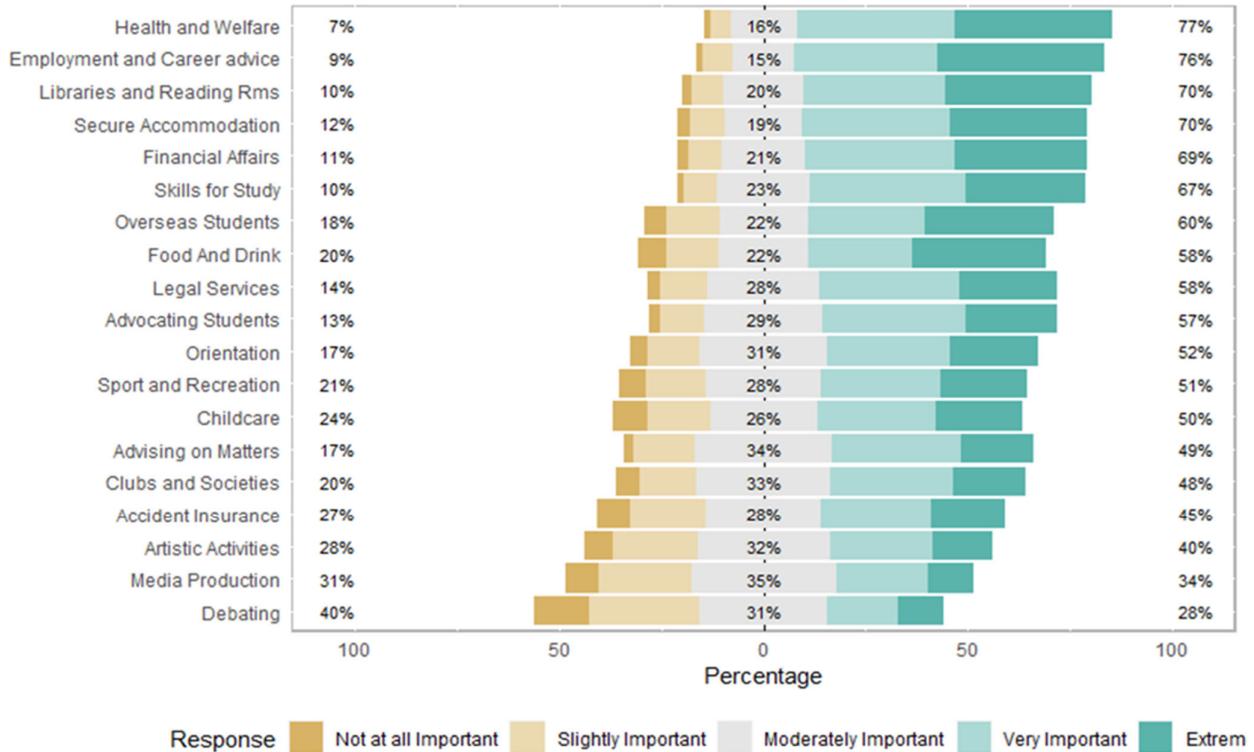
*Kassandra Savage (JCU Alumni),  
'Coming Together and Respecting Difference',  
acrylic on canvas, 2014, 90cm x 90cm*



## OVERALL RANKING OF SSAF SURVEY RESULTS

The overall ranking of all 19 SSAF categories (abbreviated) is shown in Figure 1, along with the distribution of responses to each.

**FIGURE 1: 2023 RANKING AND OVERALL DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES TO THE 19 SSAF CATEGORIES (ABBREVIATED)**



## RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

The 2023 SSAF Survey was distributed to 13,505 students, with 1,164 surveys completed, giving an overall response rate of 8.6%.

Consistent with the 2021 Survey, students who identified as Indigenous, International or Non-English at Home tended to rate all categories as higher importance compared to the full population and Health and Welfare and Employment and Career Advice were again top 1 and 2 respectively.

**TABLE 1: TOP 5 CATEGORIES OF IMPORTANCE AS RATED BY RESPONDENTS**

SSAF CATEGORY	RANKING				
	2023	2021	DELTA	2019	DELTA
Health and Welfare	1	1	0	1	0
Employment and Career Advice	2	2	0	2	0
Libraries and Reading Rooms (peer to peer spaces)	3	3	0	4	1
Secure Accommodation	4	6	2	7	3
Financial Affairs	5	4	-1	3	-2

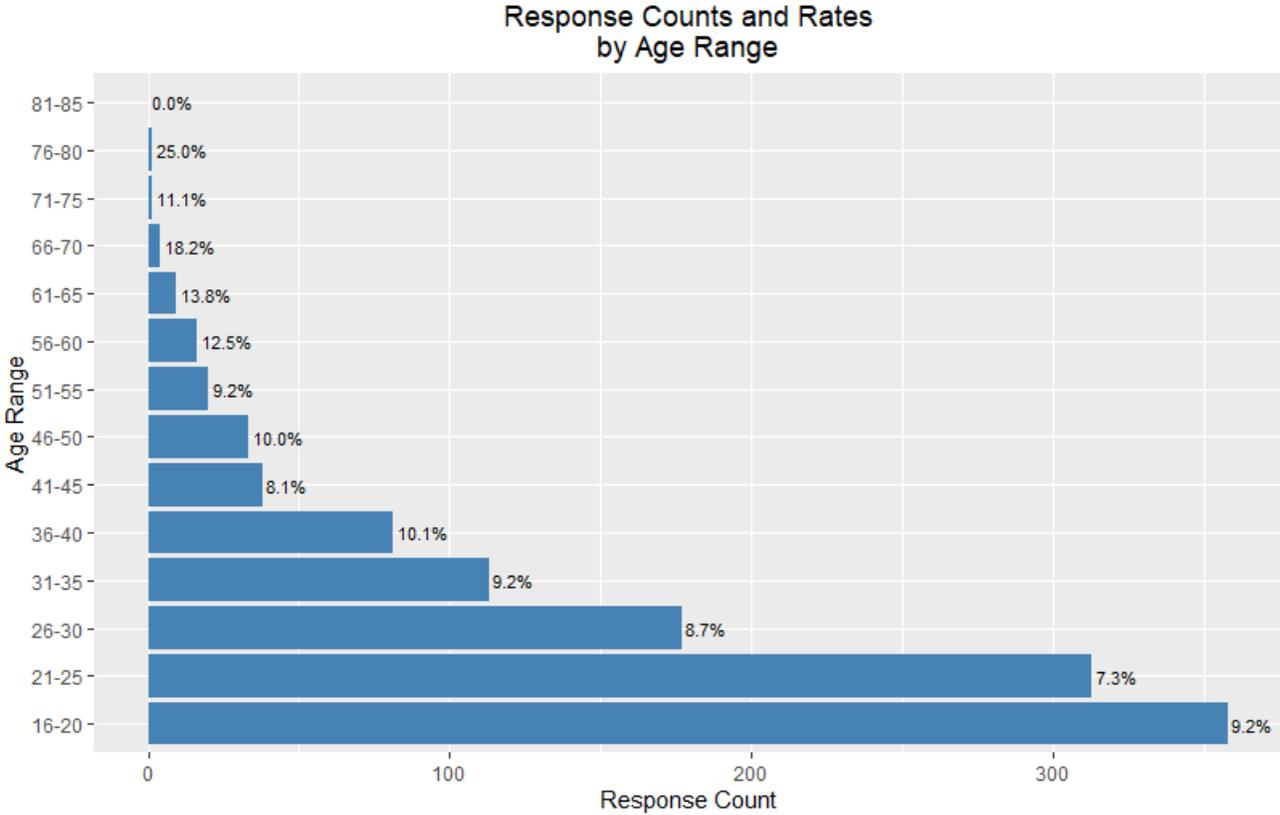
Table 1 above shows that the top 3 have remained unchanged since the 2021 SSAF Survey, Secure Accommodation has moved up to 4<sup>th</sup> place and Financial Affairs has moved down to 5<sup>th</sup>.

**TABLE 2: TOP 5 SSAF CATEGORIES FOR 2023, BY CAMPUS AND ATTENDANCE MODE**

ITEM	POPULATION	BY CAMPUS					BY ATTENDANCE MODE		
		TOWNSVILLE	CAIRNS	BRISBANE	MACKAY	MT ISA	INTERNAL	EXTERNAL	MIXED
Health and Welfare	1	1	2	3	2	5	1	2	1
Employment and Career Advice	2	2	1	1	1		2	3	2
Libraries and Reading Rooms	3	3	3	4	4	4	3	4	3
Secure Accommodation	4	4	4		3		4	5	5
Financial Affairs	5	5	5	5			5		4
Skills for Study								1	
Overseas Students				2		3			
Advocating Students									
Sport and Recreation						2			
Childcare						1			
Advising on Matters									
Accident Insurance					5				

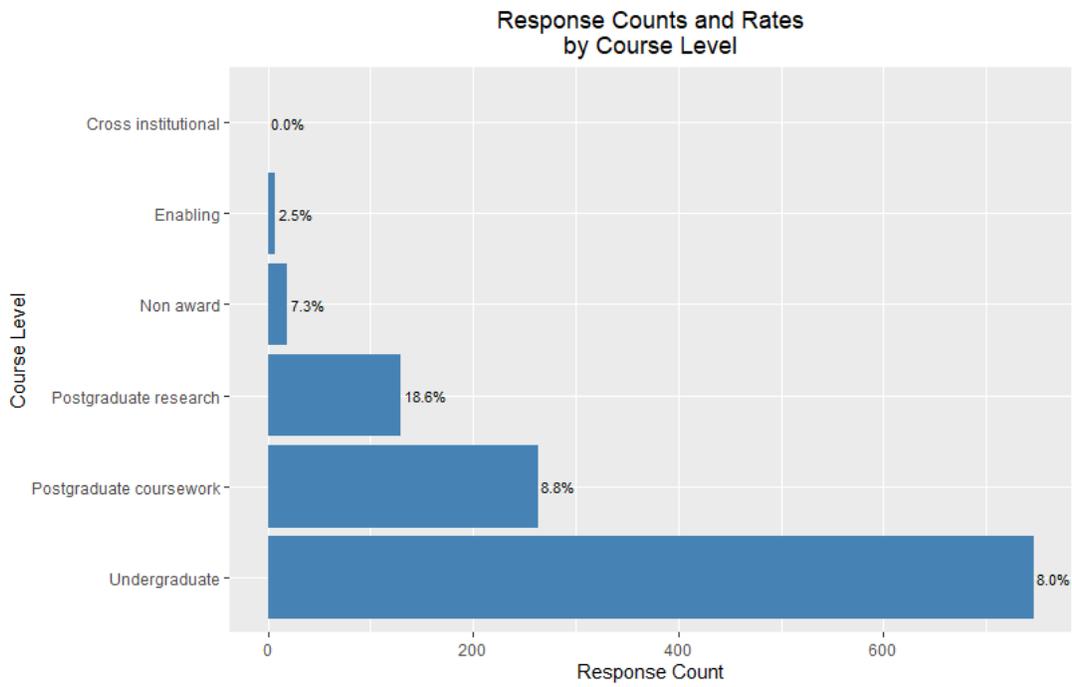
The breakdown by campus (Table 2) shows that Townsville and Cairns are almost aligned with each other, with only 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> switching positions in Cairns since the 2021 Survey, with some broader deviations from the overall top 5 apparent with the less populous campuses. Lesser deviations from the overall top 5 emerged when broken down by attendance mode.

**FIGURE 2: 2023 RESPONSE COUNTS AND RATES, BY AGE RANGE**



Response rates by age range (Figure 2) show all groups generally achieving response rates between 7% and 14%, with some (expected) higher variation among the less populous groups. 58% of respondents were aged 25 and under.

**FIGURE 4: 2023 RESPONSE COUNTS AND RATES, BY COURSE LEVEL**

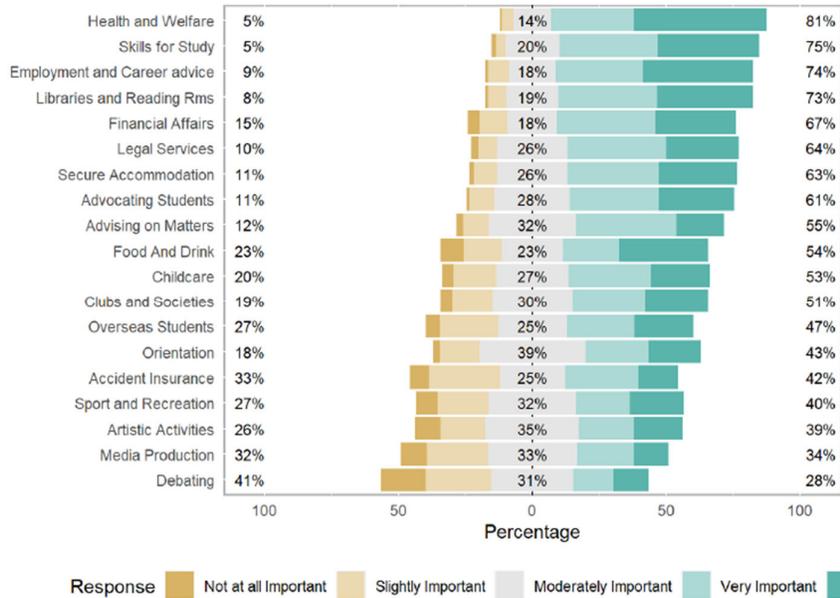


By course level (Figure 4), Postgraduate Research achieved the highest response rate. However, Undergraduates still comprised 64% of all respondents.

**FIGURE 5: IDENTIFIES HAVING A DISABILITY (N=114)**

**Observations:**

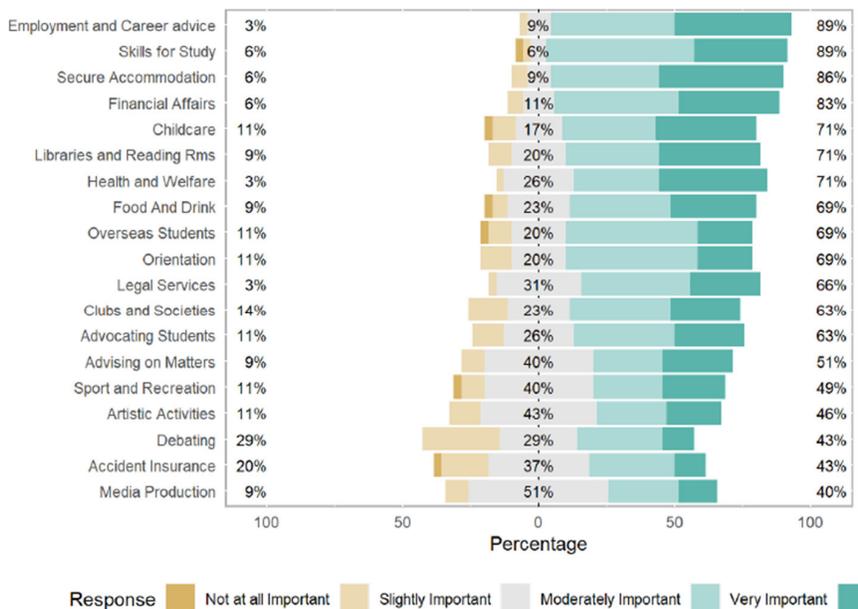
- Compared to the full population - Overseas Students is down five places.
- Two of the five top categories - Health and Welfare and Financial Affairs - are the same at 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> position respectively. Skills for Study is now in 2<sup>nd</sup> position and Employment and Career Advice has dropped from 2<sup>nd</sup> place to 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- The top 7 contains the full population top 6, the only variance being Legal Services in 6<sup>th</sup> position versus 9<sup>th</sup> in the full population.



**FIGURE 6: IDENTIFIES INDIGENOUS (N=35)**

**Observations:**

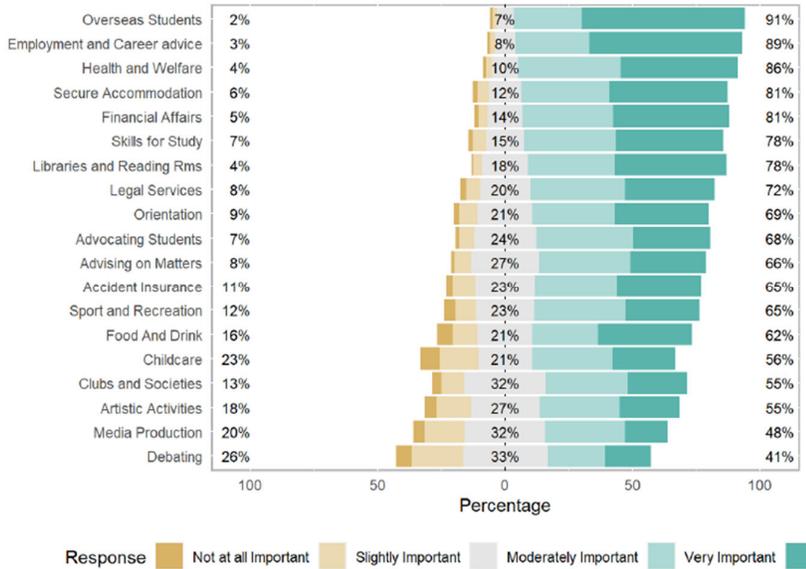
- Compared to the full population – Employment and Career Advice is up one place to 1<sup>st</sup> (compared to 4<sup>th</sup> place in 2021), Skills for Study is up 4 places to 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Libraries and Reading Rooms is down 2 places to 5<sup>th</sup>.
- In 2021 Health and Welfare was rated highest importance of all demographic groups. In 2023 it is approximate equal 5<sup>th</sup> with Childcare (Childcare is in the bottom half in all other demographics).



**FIGURE 7: IDENTIFIES INTERNATIONAL (N=360)**

**Observations:**

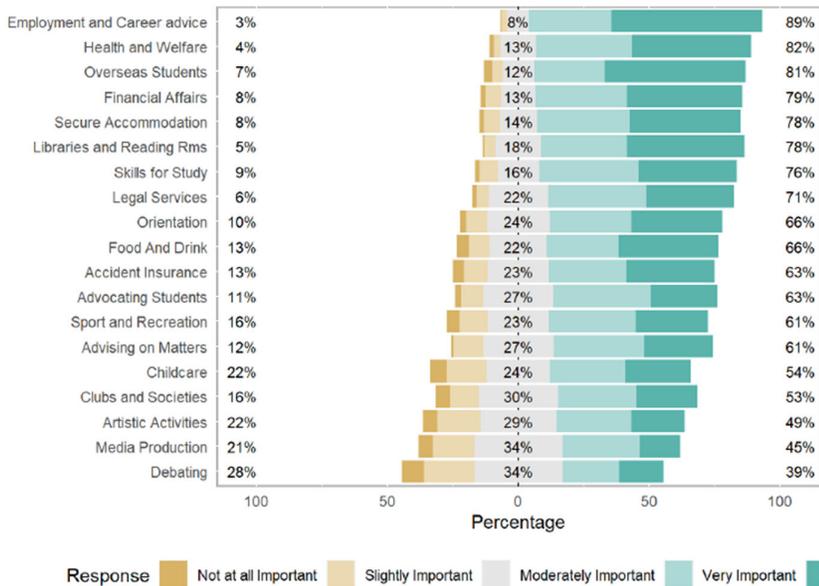
- Compared to the full population – Overseas Students advanced from 7<sup>th</sup> position to 1<sup>st</sup>, the next six are the top 6 in the full population.
- Employment and Career Advice, Secure Accommodation and Financial Affairs ranked the same for International students at 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> place respectively. Health and Welfare dropped from to 1<sup>st</sup> position to 3<sup>rd</sup>.



**FIGURE 8: IDENTIFIES NON-ENGLISH AT HOME (N=267)**

**Observations:**

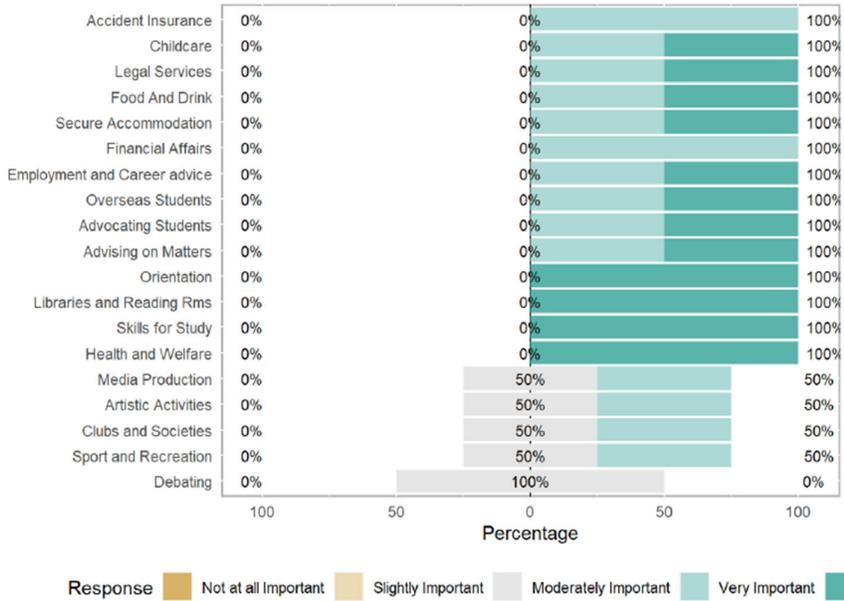
- Compared to the full population - top seven are the same, just in a different order.
- Very little variance between Non-English and International Students results. Overseas Students is in 3<sup>rd</sup> place instead of 1<sup>st</sup>, Legal Services is at equal 8<sup>th</sup> and Orientation at equal 9<sup>th</sup> and most other relative movements are only by one or two positions.



**FIGURE 9: IDENTIFIES NON-BINARY GENDER (N=2)**

**Observations:**

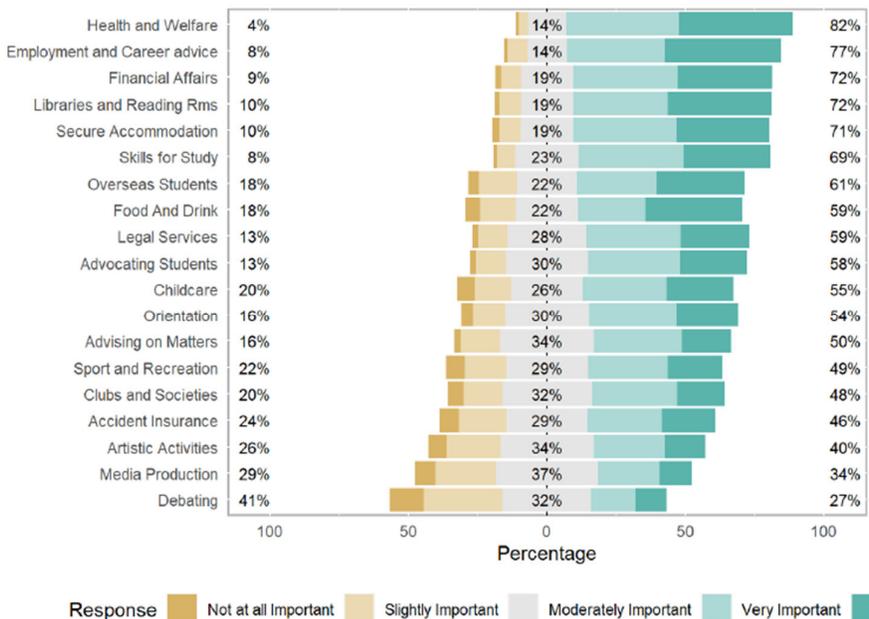
- Difficult to draw any conclusions with such a small sample size.
- Debating is in last place, which is consistent with five of the six other groups.



**FIGURE 10: IDENTIFIES AS FEMALE (N=832)**

**Observations:**

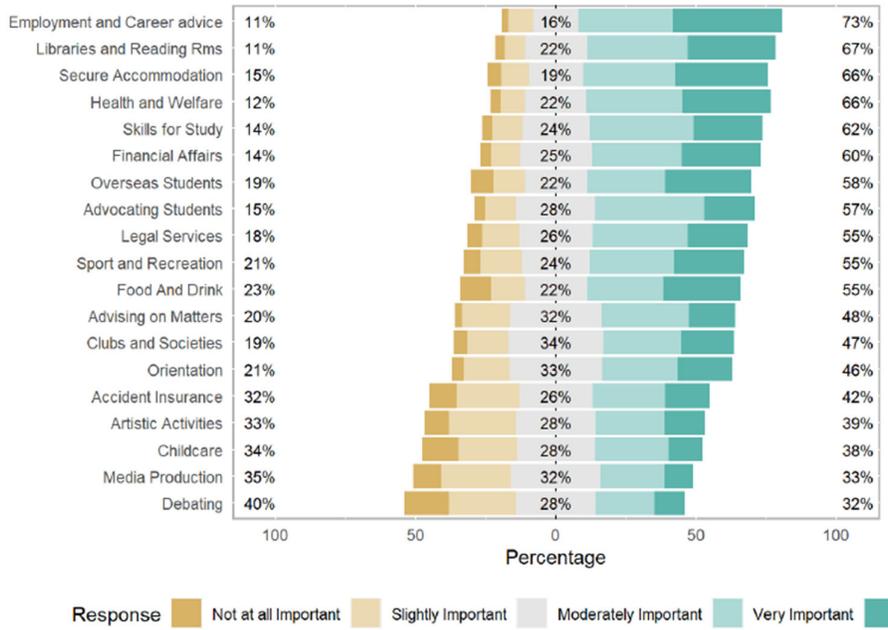
- 71.5% of the total respondent population identified as female and all categories within one or two positions of full population, not surprising as this is two-thirds of the total population.



**FIGURE 11: IDENTIFIES AS MALE (N=330)**

**Observations:**

- For males the top six are the same as females, only the positions differ, and there are no notable variances across all SSAF categories.



## FEEDBACK AND SUGGESTIONS

Students were asked to provide general comments that help to understand their priorities and to provide suggestions for projects that could be funded by the SSA Fee in 2024.

General Comments – 499 responses

Suggestions – 383 responses

The following themes were identified from responses:

### STUDENT FEEDBACK AND SUGGESTIONS

<b>HEALTH &amp; WELFARE</b>	<b>FEEDBACK</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Health and well-being is a priority and comes first in student experience at JCU.</li><li>• Emotional and physical support should be where the majority of the SSAF go.</li><li>• Health is wealth.</li><li>• A good environment where peer support is encouraged and bullying is not permitted.</li><li>• Our well-being is paramount to our success as students.</li><li>• More counselling support services with shorter wait times to allow students to access the support they need in a shorter time frame.</li><li>• Ensuring and supporting students' wellbeing and academic progress by providing relevant, supportive and inclusive services.</li><li>• General support and mental wellbeing is very important and should be considered when planning all projects, new ideas.</li><li>• Supporting mental health is important, specifically students who are studying away from the campus (external and online) who need a lot of support.</li><li>• Support for isolated students' wellbeing should be a priority. This situation needs more attention since the COVID-19 pandemic.</li><li>• Providing access to affordable mental health and healthcare services.</li><li>• Important to allow students to have a forum to discuss issues they are experiencing and how to overcome them.</li><li>• Embracing our diverse student body is essential for fostering a positive campus environment. Funding cultural events, diversity initiatives, and promoting inclusivity will help us celebrate our differences and create a welcoming atmosphere for all students.</li></ul> <b>SUGGESTIONS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A colouring competition, one with promotes understanding for student mental health and wellbeing. The competition may involve a prize or used as an art piece and displayed somewhere on campus.</li><li>• Free period products and period bins in all toilets, and support for abortion and / or harassment on campus.</li><li>• Mindfulness and Meditation Programs: Mindfulness sessions are introduced in schools or community centers, teaching students relaxation techniques and mindfulness practices to improve mental focus and emotional regulation.</li></ul>
<b>EMPLOYMENT &amp; CAREER ADVICE</b>	<b>FEEDBACK</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• As we prepare to enter the job market, investing in career development resources such as career counselling, job fairs, and internship opportunities will give us a competitive edge and help us transition smoothly into our careers.</li><li>• Help getting through our studies and then finding employment are the main goals of university study.</li><li>• Helping students prepare for the workforce and 'adult life' as most students are school-leavers and high school provides little to no preparation for working and practical life skills.</li><li>• Helping students with their career options and guide them with internship.</li><li>• Help students with engagement in school and employment-focused activities.</li><li>• Increasing employability after university, and what options there are.</li><li>• Career growth after the completion of the study are extremely important for the students to have the proper knowledge for the field.</li></ul>

- Providing important services like Career Advisors is a priority.
- The priority should be on getting students into jobs and helping them succeed in their endeavours.

#### **SUGGESTIONS**

- Student Leadership Development: Organise leadership development workshops and programs to empower students with essential leadership skills and foster a culture of active student involvement.
- A group, or maybe guest speaker that can talk about employability relating to subjects, and possible specialised class for such skills.
- Academic trips can be partially sponsored by the universities so the students can visit places that maybe of career interests to them for learning purposes.
- Anything that helps guide students from study to employment, and especially when close to graduation, e.g. transition to practice.
- Business related seminars and conferences.
- School-Community Partnerships: Schools collaborate with local businesses, organizations, or non-profits to offer mentorship programs, internships, or job shadowing opportunities, providing students with real-world experiences and career insights.
- More career days to allow students to network with industry players.
- Networking nights with specific degrees and their professions in their industries, not large events that people can get lost in, but rather bachelor based events.
- Weekly interview practice sessions.
- Workshops to help students transition smoothly into the workforce after graduation.
- Funding to engage JCU Alumni online seminars and share experiences of how they secured their job.

#### **LIBRARIES & READING ROOMS / STUDY SPACES AND CAMPUS FACILITIES**

#### **FEEDBACK**

- Increased number of study rooms in library and across campus, especially around exam time.
- We need more study areas that accessible 24/7 for students to use.
- Enhancing campus facilities like libraries, recreational spaces, and study areas will create a conducive environment for learning, socializing, and collaborating with peers.
- Access to modern technology and updated infrastructure will enhance our learning experience and enable us to stay connected and engaged with our studies.
- Renovated Study Spaces and Collaborative Areas: space we have now is more occupied at most of the time with student having trouble to find space for group discussions.
- Campus spaces are the most important - having clean, modern, well lit and accessible spaces for learning.
- Priorities around studying services and more facilities where we can study or have access to free tutors to help us with our subjects.
- Better study facilities and rooms across the campus in all faculty buildings, and better cleaning and upkeep of these facilities.
- More free parking spaces to meet the needs of students.
- Having study rooms are very beneficial for group assignments and meeting up with friends to study.
- The library is always busy and other study spaces are unadvertised or unavailable.
- More improvements in the Library spaces.

#### **SUGGESTIONS**

- Can we have multiple small phone box kind of room, so many people can have access for this purpose?
- Student resource center to open for longer hours and close at 8pm or 9pm as some of us prefer to stay back in school and do our research and assignments.
- Money should be spent on the smaller campuses too! More learning spaces!
- Have clean outdoor study spaces that can be used all year round.
- Enabling a safe space when walking around, to and from the campus.
- Funding activities or projects that make the student experience more positive, should be the priority e.g., ensuring the toilets are clean, having more microwave and water refill stations, creating more parking space, creating more places to study, supporting JCU

	<p>counselling and wellbeing services etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JCU should highly consider completely redoing the roads on campus because the poor condition of the roads negatively reflects on the University's reputation.</li> <li>• Improve transportation options and ensuring campus accessibility for all students.</li> <li>• Cameras in car parks and covered walkways to and from parking spaces.</li> <li>• Provide an ATM near the library.</li> <li>• Provide charging stations for student devices like they have at the Townsville Hospital.</li> <li>• Self-service bike repair stations around campus? Allen wrenches, screw drivers, bike pumps.</li> <li>• A ride service that is free and accessible for travel around campus, particularly for students with mobility issues.</li> <li>• A free ride service, a rental car service or a groups of volunteers who will drive students to get groceries or to work.</li> <li>• Ensure pathways are well lit at night to ensure the safety of students walking to and from car parks as well as to and from campus colleges, especially after late night classes.</li> <li>• A sit down coffee/study area.</li> <li>• Priorities should be given to outside study spaces and facilities on campus.</li> <li>• Increased isolation pods in the library.</li> <li>• 24 hour full access to the entire library.</li> <li>• Purchase functional furniture for students to utilise instead of for aesthetics or visual appeal.</li> <li>• Create Art and Creative Spaces: Develop dedicated art studios and creative spaces on campus to encourage students' artistic expression and foster a vibrant arts community.</li> <li>• Upgrade facilities at Vet.</li> <li>• Reinstate the old refectory and bar.</li> <li>• More toilets around JCU sporting grounds.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SECURE ACCOMMODATION</b></p>	<p><b>FEEDBACK</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finding accommodation on campus and off is difficult.</li> <li>• Finding accommodation is especially difficult for international students and their families who relocate. If Universities could assist in consultation with relevant government agencies it would be much helpful.</li> <li>• Accommodation is really important for students. Especially hard to find a property in Townsville.</li> <li>• Priority for housing and lodging as there is a current shortage of housing rentals and boarding in Townsville.</li> <li>• The scarcity of accommodation constitute a mental stress to international students.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUGGESTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing more on campus accommodation options that are affordable.</li> <li>• International students struggle with accommodation, particularly for the first few months. Can the University explore possibilities to provide temporary shelter at reasonable rental rates?</li> </ul>
<p><b>SKILLS FOR STUDY / ACADEMIC SUPPORT</b></p>	<p><b>FEEDBACK</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support students for them to be able to take responsibility of the work they are doing. (i.e. Studiosity, Grammerly, one search).</li> <li>• Help services for students directly related to supporting them with information related to assignment and study support - library support, Studiosity, Learning Advisors etc.</li> <li>• Students need to be supported to develop independence and how to develop resilience so they can contribute independently when they graduate.</li> <li>• Investing in support services such as tutoring programs, academic counselling, and workshops can help students overcome challenges and excel in their studies.</li> <li>• General study support should be more available, like sessions about how to study and different methods.</li> <li>• PASS classes are such a helpful class and I'm very grateful for them.</li> <li>• The academic services (learning advisors) helped me with scheduling and study tips which helped me get good marks last semester.</li> </ul>

## SUGGESTIONS

- Mentorship Programs: Establish mentorship programs that connect experienced students with newly commencing students to provide guidance and support during their transition to university life.
- Funding for HDR Student-to-Student coaching of specific computer software programs on need basis.
- Help students to feel heard and valued when we raise issues with our respective faculties.
- Peer tutoring and Academic Support Program.
- Catch up classes for study skills in-between high school and university.
- All degrees should receive the same amount of support e.g. synthesising sessions, inspiration/educational talk sessions and guest interviewers.
- It would be great to see a voluntary class that can be added as an elective on learning AUSLAN.
- Mandatory textbooks should be provided for students or available from the uni at a discounted rate.
- More academic help such as tutors as well as more and longer in person classes rather than online classes and lots of online work.
- More class schedule availability.
- More PASS sessions and tutoring and support for students.
- Shifting PASS to focus on increasing the tutorial and tutor method of support and learning for students as an additional way to take working load off of lecturers.
- Increase in subjects that offer PASS and regular check in from student learning advisors whether the student appears to be behind or not.
- First Aid and CPR course for those who need it for fieldwork as we do not get much funding for research per year.
- Set up discussion groups for each discipline.
- Investment into additional discipline specific study tools.

## OVERSEAS STUDENTS

### FEEDBACK

- As an international student, any assistance with adapting to living in Australia is most important.
- As an international student, the most important things center around how to get set up well here. Housing, getting help in case of legal trouble, etc.
- Help for international students with scholarships.
- Help finding future employment opportunities are a priority to me.
- Assistance in things such as mental health, finding a place to live and having a solid study space on campus.
- Ensure equitable support for students whose visas are issued after the orientation period.
- There aren't enough staff who focus on the lifestyle of internationals.
- Most beneficial would be the financial management assistance, the legality of our student visas and transitions to post-graduate working visas and helping with accommodations and support in helping us prepare and potentially find jobs post-graduation.
- Improve international students' communication skills and career-oriented program.
- International students face things some may not. All of the mental health, financial, insurance, and similar issues to help students is very important for them to have success.
- International students should be given options to pay the fees on an installment basis.
- Making uni environment familiar especially for international students in their first year.
- Mental support, accommodation, and job-finding support for international students, as they are new to this country, really need background support from the university.
- Need support staff who are physically present to attend to international students.
- Since most of the students are very far away from home they usually need a safe place and someone to count on.
- Support international students with accommodation, wellbeing, employment and child care/child education since, overseas students.
- Supporting International Students in having a payment plan towards school fee.
- There are lack of services that are needed especially for international students, who sometimes are afraid to speak out because the culture, religion or beliefs are different.
- Extra academic support and assistance with securing jobs is extremely important for

	<p>international students.</p> <p><b>SUGGESTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help fund international students voice and speech therapy short courses so we can be able to learn and develop public speaking Skills. Effective communication is a real challenge for us especially non-English speaking international students.</li> <li>• SSAF could be used to cover accommodation and settling needs, as well as giving opportunities for students to meet their colleagues/peers.</li> </ul>
<b>FOOD &amp; DRINK</b>	<p><b>FEEDBACK</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free breakfasts and days with animals are always nice. Good for mental health.</li> <li>• Love free food. Helps with the cost of living.</li> <li>• Free food and drinks are great ways to have a break from study and relax with friends.</li> <li>• Free food is great for students who need it - but not everyone does.</li> <li>• Providing free food is always helpful as students forget to eat food in the middle of the hustle.</li> <li>• Mid-week Mingle is very good.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUGGESTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More free food event might attract more students to campus.</li> <li>• Would like to see more food and drinks on campus, preferably in the form of a bar.</li> <li>• A cheap meals facility. I've chosen accommodation without meals included.</li> <li>• More food trucks.</li> </ul>
<b>FINANCIAL &amp; LEGAL SERVICES</b>	<p><b>FEEDBACK</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial support for conferences.</li> <li>• Providing legal advice to students without self-interest. Things like visas Graduate, dependant visas, spouse visas, and work-related cases, will help students while settling in Australia.</li> <li>• Maintaining open dialogue and legal support and advocacy holds the highest priority.</li> <li>• More legal access or disability access would be awesome.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUGGESTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School fee for self-sponsor, need to allocate into installment payment for particular program such as bachelor or masters. E.g. monthly or weekly payment should be great.</li> <li>• Provide scholarships for external International students who pursue doctoral programs.</li> <li>• Provide more student discounts at stores.</li> <li>• Food coupons/Vouchers for Coles would be more beneficial.</li> <li>• An on campus op shop (textbooks, computers, clothes, furniture, etc).</li> <li>• Bring back the 10% subject free reduction when paying up front! or any student help reductions if paid up front. Student fees are becoming ridiculous.</li> <li>• Financial assistance for travel and help with accommodation for students who do not live locally, but need to travel to, and stay in Townsville for a number of days to complete mandatory face-to-face sessions.</li> <li>• Share care availability for students living on campus.</li> <li>• I think students should get more financial support if they aim to volunteer on the dive register.</li> </ul>
<b>ADVOCATING STUDENTS' INTERESTS</b>	<p><b>FEEDBACK</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding how students can advocate for things to be added to the teaching curriculum i.e. LGBTQ+ specifically transgender and gender-diverse education for healthcare students.</li> <li>• More resources need to be put towards student advocacy.</li> <li>• Support for students when advocating matters to their specific faculties.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUGGESTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An advocate for students to liaise with the head board of subjects.</li> </ul>

## SPORT & RECREATION, CLUBS AND SOCIETIES

### FEEDBACK

- Sporting events are fun and good way to get active.
- Why do we have to pay \$20 an hour to use the basketball court at night in Townsville when we are already paying SSA fees.
- Fund more sporting events and clubs subsidies representing JCU.
- More fun events should be hosted to foster social inclusion amongst people of all backgrounds and degrees (i.e. trivia night/day) etc.
- I would love the student groups affiliated with JCUSA on campus to receive more funding.
- More support for clubs and associations and more on campus events please during daytime hours!
- With student in-class engagement at record lows, more requirement needs to be put on Student unions to pass the SSAF money into student societies.
- Upgraded sports facilities.
- Increased funding for JCUSA Sport would be appreciated.
- Supporting sports facilities, fitness centers, and promoting a healthy lifestyle will contribute to our overall well-being and encourage healthy habits during our time at university.
- Emphasis needed on student clubs/bodies/societies to create a sense of unity and belonging and to actually have a "university" experience.
- Uni can be stressful more activities need to be done in order to distract people from that stress. E.g. fun Fridays.
- Activities on campus that are accessible to students, providing exercise opportunities (gym memberships).
- Activities that improve the university experience for students should be prioritised.
- Student organizations play a significant role in our personal and professional growth. Allocating funds to support a diverse range of clubs and societies will encourage student involvement, leadership opportunities, and social interactions.
- As an international student, there are events on campus to support making friendships however the timings of these events are not suitable for everyone to attend.
- I love the Student Association events that are run e.g. lunches, market days & live music events, it is great for socialising with other students.
- I think it is more important to invest in social activities (e.g. sporting events, drinking events, any extra curricular activities) to provide bonding opportunities for students.
- It is important to have activities at the University, such as sports and debating teams, because connecting to each other is important.
- More student based recreational events and places where organic support networks can arise and take place.
- The sporting facilities are severely lacking at JCU compared to any uni around Aus.

### SUGGESTIONS

- Petting animals.
- Community Engagement and Volunteering Initiatives.
- Outdoor Recreation and Adventure Programs.
- Perhaps having monthly events like a trip to Maggi island together would be nice.
- Cultural exchange shows.
- Cheaper gym membership.
- Have a centralized hub such as a specific website or bigger university club that can manage other clubs would be useful.
- Allow students to use their SSA fee for the gym.
- For events run at lunch time extend for longer than an hour, some degrees only have a 1 hour break from 12-1 and often miss out.
- A pool to promote water sports.
- Gym is in desperate need of more equipment, and/or a larger space.
- Please provide playground for outdoor sports like cricket.
- A sport competition between both campus Townsville and Brisbane.
- An end of the year carnival or something really fun the last week of classes.
- Expand e-sports.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More toilets around JCU sporting grounds.</li> <li>• Fitness Passport access for HDR PhD candidates.</li> <li>• Inter-college mingling activities.</li> <li>• More investment in the interfaculty sporting events to increase participation. Perhaps funding drinks for finals or assigning an amount of money per faculty to invest in uniforms/ promotions/ food to increase engagement - also ensuring each faculty has a designated sports rep to allow easier communication and event planning.</li> <li>• Unlock ovals for student athletes to train on, paint track lines (400m).</li> <li>• Travel show - someone visiting rural and remote students.</li> <li>• Fitness Passport access for HDR PhD candidates.</li> <li>• More engagement and activities for students that don't live on campus. We really miss out on having the full uni experience e.g. fun days or even events on the weekends, bbq and/or drinks on a Friday night once a month or something.</li> </ul>
<b>CHILDCARE</b>	<p><b>FEEDBACK</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Childcare facilities are important as there is no childcare subsidy for children of students.</li> <li>• Subsidised childcare is a good idea.</li> <li>• Townsville has childcare available on campus and it would be great if that was available in Cairns.</li> <li>• Many students are very concerned about living arrangements, especially with the cost of living crisis. This is made worse for students who have children as childcare is a huge expense and barrier to their academic success.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUGGESTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange support for the childcare to allow parents to attend university.</li> <li>• Subsidised help with aftercare and child care fees.</li> <li>• Subsidies for childcare for children of international students.</li> <li>• Unicare give priority to JCU students' children.</li> </ul>
<b>COMMUNICATION &amp; AWARENESS</b>	<p><b>FEEDBACK</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services that go towards things that might be helpful in specific field of study.</li> <li>• Communicate SSA Fees to students via a public email.</li> <li>• It's important for students to feel heard, but also to get right information and build up a good community.</li> <li>• JCU already covers a broad array of student services, but accessing them is complicated and sometimes students are not even aware of their availability.</li> <li>• Support when communicating with the university. Information is not easy to obtain or you find out after that processes weren't followed but you didn't know the process, i.e. notifying students of FSE exams and letting students view failed exam to improve chances of success.</li> <li>• The costs are high but I feel like I don't get benefit. Partly because I don't see advertisements about what's on.</li> <li>• There sometimes isn't an awareness that the services funded by the SSA fee exist to students.</li> <li>• Zero information about JCUSA and similar. If these organisations / clubs are going to be funded with student money, it's important that information about what they do and the services they provide is disseminated to all students.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUGGESTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More brand partnerships e.g. student Spotify discount type things.</li> <li>• It would be helpful to have some sort of service that provides us with all the places that have student discounts and if more discounts could be implemented.</li> </ul>

## EXTERNAL/ONLINE STUDENTS

### FEEDBACK

- More support for off campus students. Most support appears to benefit those on campus.
- As an external student my priorities are more towards online services.
- As a mature aged external student no benefit having to pay this fee. If it went to paying for compulsory nurse student uniforms, travel subsidy and free on campus accommodation for external students during residential block then it would benefit me.
- As an external student, it would be great to have programs available to feel more a part of the university and perhaps encourage study buddies etc.
- Engagement and better inclusion of external students.
- External student studying online- does not get benefits of many of the resources or facilities available to students on campus.
- Help for remote students with poor internet reception, and student general welfare.
- I study online, therefore the services available to external students are more suited to my needs.
- Providing support for online students. Potentially arranging groups?
- I'm an external student so to me the only things that matter are around student support, like extra classes / tutorials etc.
- Off campus students often do not see any of their funds benefiting them which becomes an issue. Often we attend campus in the uni breaks and this is when nothing is going on and everything is usually shut. More benefits for off-campus students would be beneficial or scrap the fees for off campus students.
- Reconsider the SSA fee percentage for external students.

### SUGGESTIONS

- Collaboration nights/platforms for external students.
- Shared/coordinated distribution lists/contacts (with permission) of Externals within similar geography.
- Touch base phone call program for external students to help navigate online programs. I.e. yearly phone call to check in Re: enrolments etc. some subjects available some years and not others makes it hard to stick to an enrolment plan and get the most out of time!
- I'd like to see an event funded for all external students to come together. Or even a regular external zoom meeting/group because external HDR is incredibly lonely and not many people get it!
- Support for Sudo journal out of CASE (Postgrad students pay SSA too!).

## SUPPORT FOR OTHER STUDENT GROUPS

### FEEDBACK

- Some students don't have sufficient support for research activities, it needs to be looked at.
- Needs and priorities are different for mature age students.
- HDR students feel that their SSA fees are a total loss.
- Specific funds set aside for the Cairns campus for health and wellbeing of HDR students.
- More support for students who live off campus.
- More support directed towards those who have barriers to attendance and continuation of their studies. There's no scholarships or bursaries for single parents, for example.
- There should be a separation of using SSA fees based on undergraduates and HDR students. Most of the services are targeted to undergraduates.
- SSA fee provide support to vulnerable and marginalised students, helping people to get through university (e.g. by having food, accommodation, welfare support) is more important than improving the university experience (e.g. through sport and clubs).
- Priorities for the SSAF should be things that student CANNOT do by themselves, especially students in difficult/unique circumstances.

### SUGGESTIONS

- Establish an Indigenous Students Association.
- Work with the IERC to see how Indigenous uni students can be supported and also to assist in helping Indigenous students at high school with positive role models to go out and talk with schools.
- Supporting single parents to connect.

- Funding for online competition for digitalised exhibitions and posters for HDR students to showcase their research. Similar to 3MT but without talking.
- Senior students (MPhil and PhD) get way less important things for them. Recently there have been some well-designed workshops and Q&A but they are mostly online and there is not much attendance, maybe because they are solely advertised via emails. There is the need for a body of admin, help, support, event organisations etc. that focuses more on research-students (something led by students). This could help with research/academic workshops, facilitation with supervisors and projects, networking, career opportunities.

## CAIRNS

### FEEDBACK

- More social activities and engagement for students in Cairns.
- More of a 'uni-life' e.g. sports, clubs etc., would be beneficial to the Cairns campus.
- Really enjoying the on-campus activities in Cairns lately like the midweek mingles - being able to have the food on campus and a welcoming environment encourages me to attend.
- Boathouse at Cairns Campus has minimal commercial use or is under utilised. SSA can organise social and students' engagement activities or events.
- The Cairns campus needs more attention.
- As an international student on the Cairns campus, I feel like I've only heard of a handful of those things, so I'm not sure if they just aren't provided on this campus or if they haven't been properly marketed to the students.
- More free carparking for JCU Cairns campus.

### SUGGESTIONS

- Tea/coffee/alt milk at Cairns campus for student use.
- Renovation of all water taps around the Cairns campus.
- 7am-8am breakfasts on campus, raffles and competitions to win JCU branded gear, and uni supplies/laptops etc., a talent quest/concert, art competitions open to students not necessarily studying art, zine club, poetry club, drama club, nursing & midwifery association in Cairns.
- Reinstate Rhino Club in Cairns.

## MACKAY

### FEEDBACK

- It is very frustrating we pay the same fee yet have none of the services available to on campus students.
- The Mackay Mater campus needs a library or at least the base campus needs one that nursing students can access as well.

### SUGGESTIONS

- An improvement/expansion of the Mackay campus, such as integration of an on-campus library, to improve accessibility to textbook resources and fulfill the worth of the SSA fee especially for those who don't attend main and bigger campuses such as Cairns and Townsville that hold student gathering and learning orientated events.  
Improved library facilities in Mackay with bookcases so that the books are visible and not locked in a cupboard.

## BRISBANE

### FEEDBACK & SUGGESTIONS

- The Brisbane Campus need more resources to make the students have more interactions within them and an all-time open library.
- Sports club should be one of the priorities in JCUB Brisbane.

## GENERAL COMMENTS

### FEEDBACK

- SSA should be spent on services that ALL students directly receive benefit from.
- JCU should prioritise services that can benefit a larger proportion of students.
- A more United JCU, because although everyone is a part of the student body, not all members of the student body are actively supporting the student association.
- Making students feel safe and comfortable while they are away from home.
- Supporting students in a holistic manner is just as important as academic support. A well rounded and supported student is the best student.
- Less fees are the most important thing.
- Less tokenistic activities and more pragmatic ones.
- Life at uni is challenging, providing support for unforeseeable factors that affect student should be the priority.
- Students should be given basic survival needs. We spend a huge amount of money on student fees, subject fees, parking etc.
- The SSA should not become a de-facto fund for facilities improvement or maintenance.

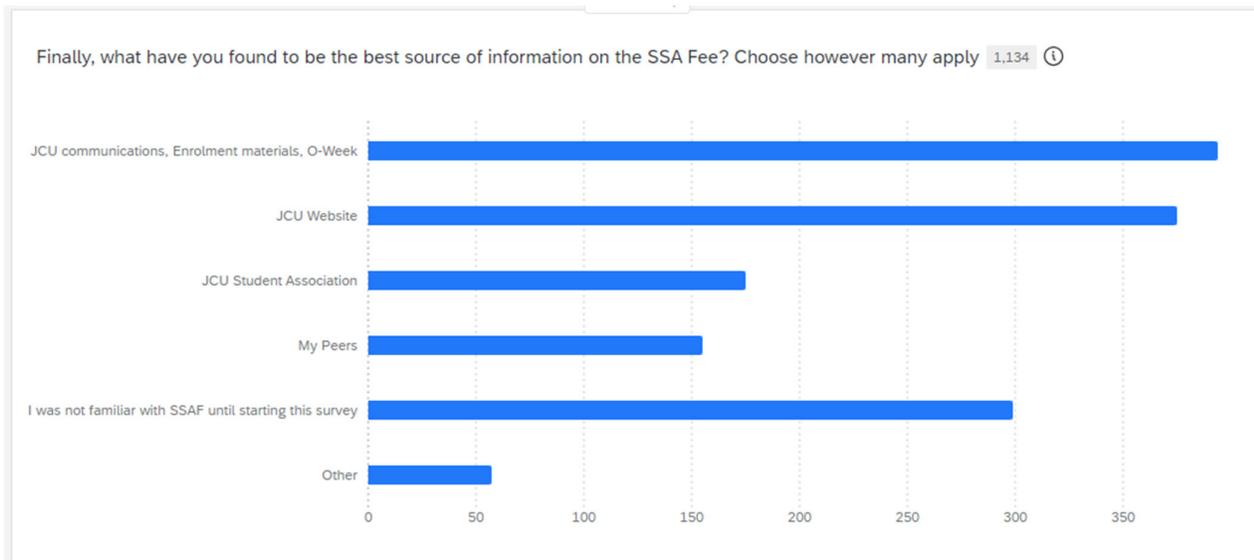
### SUGGESTIONS

- The hours spent in uni should be designed in a way that the happen all together - like maybe Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or like a similar bunch.
- A forum where students can debate lecturers' ideas to improve critical thinking among students and keeping the spirit of new ideas alive and reduce eco chambers within Australian universities.
- Provide the students with printed JCU accessories so we feel that we are part of a school and experience Uni education life.
- Sustainability is a pressing global concern, and as responsible students, we should support eco-friendly initiatives and sustainable practices on campus.
- Funding drop-in sessions held by postgraduate students where undergraduates can get help with their studies (by faculty/specialisation) while postgraduates can earn some teaching experience and income.
- Give more funding to labs and research groups to be able to support the new master programs that have students do research projects.

The accompanying word cloud was constructed from the responses to the open question.



Finally, what have you found to be the best source of information on the SSA Fee? Choose however many apply.



## FURTHER INFORMATION

James Cook University

Phone: 07 4781 4565



[jcu.edu.au](http://jcu.edu.au)