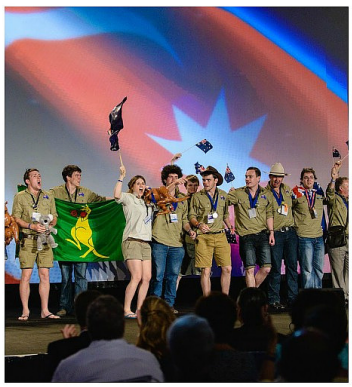
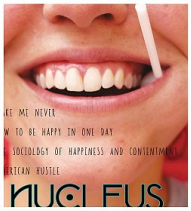
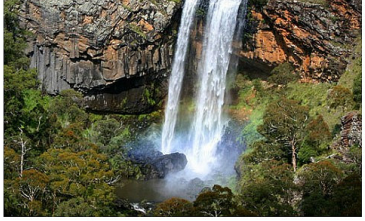
University of New England

Student Services & Amenities Fee (SSAF)







Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF)

Annual Report

2014

University of New England

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Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF)
Annual Report
2014

INTRODUCTION

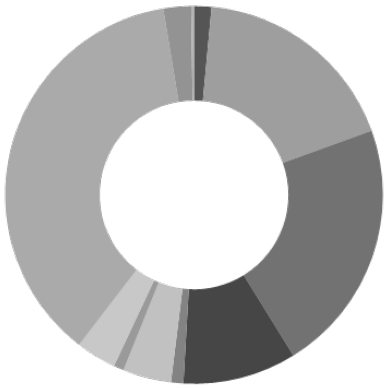
The Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) supports the provision of a range of non-academic services and facilities for students of the University of New England. This report provides a detailed financial summary of the implementation of the fee and use of funds. In 2014, a range of services and amenities were provided for on and off campus students, determined in consultation with democratically elected student representatives and the SSAF committee. Implementation of the fee was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Higher Education Support Act and its administrative, advocacy and representation guidelines.

Highlights from 2014

- The SSAF committee coordinated and managed the delivery of $1.8 million in student services and amenities through a range of unique and student-focused projects.
- Funded initiatives and projects have delivered significant services and amenities that have improved the quality of both the on-campus and off-campus student experience.
- The committee has overseen a structured and meaningful student consultation process through the annual survey, ongoing feedback, engagement with UNESA and through the committee itself.
- The committee coordinated the implementation of a student survey to assist in guiding the use of funds and to ensure fee allocation responsiveness.
- During the year, a range of project and program management tools and resources were developed to support the efficient and effective delivery of services and amenities.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Expenditure



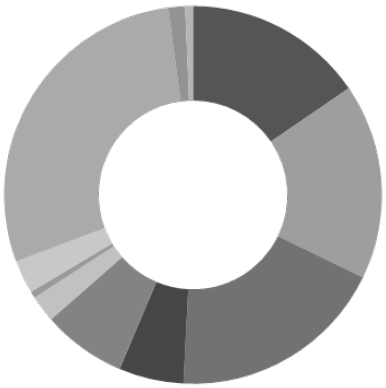
$1.8 m

In SSAF funded services and amenities delivered to students

48

Creative and unique projects delivered to students

Allocation



$80 000

In funding for student clubs and societies

13 500

Word count of the ideas gathered from the student engagement survey

ABOUT THE SSAF

On 11 October 2011, the Australian Parliament passed legislation allowing universities and other higher education providers to charge a fee for services and amenities of a non-academic nature. The Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) is charged to students for services and amenities, such as sporting and recreational activities, employment and career advice, child care, financial advice and food services. UNE has a formal consultation process with students and their representative bodies to identify priorities for the allocation of funds generated by the student services and amenities fee. Implementation of the fee is conducted in accordance with the Australian Government's Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy Guidelines, in concert with the Administrative Guidelines under the Higher Education Support Act.

The Higher Education Support Act places limits on the allowable use of funds generated through the SSAF. The SSAF is not used to support political parties, or to support the election of a person to a Commonwealth or State or Territory Parliament or local Government body. The SSAF is used for the provision of services and amenities that fall within one or a number of allowable expenditure categories. A full list of the expenditure categories is available on the UNE website as defined under legislation. The SSAF committee oversees the implementation of the fee, ensuring alignment with the allowable expenditure categories while providing a vehicle for student consultation on individual projects and funding priorities. Depending on the nature of the activity, the University may deliver the services and amenities itself or, from time to time, contract a third party to deliver them on its behalf. A detailed list of all current and proposed projects under SSAF is available on the UNE website in addition to information about how the fee is collected and managed.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Student consultation and fund allocation is overseen by the SSAF committee, delivering expertise in the management of the fee and a vehicle for consultation with students and democratically elected student representatives. The committee plays a pivotal role in managing the student consultation and fund allocation process. The committee is made up of a balanced membership of student representatives, UNESA and University staff that provide expertise in specific areas, including facilities management, student administration and services, operations and residential systems. The committee is chaired by the chief financial officer, reports to the Vice-Chancellor and is supported by a project manager. The purpose of the SSAF committee is to:

- Oversee student consultation and related activities in line with the requirements of the Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy Guidelines.
- Serve as a forum for the University to meet with democratically elected student representatives to consider priorities for the use of student services and amenities fee (SSAF) revenue.
- Provide the Vice-Chancellor with recommendations for the distribution of SSAF revenue.
- Monitor the use of SSAF revenue against proposed priorities.

In 2014, the SSAF committee further strengthened its strategic framework with the addition of immediate and long term fee management priorities to support the achievement of SSAF objectives, including: enhanced student consultation and engagement; benefits realisation; and strategic program management tools, outlined below.

Immediate	*Medium term*
Enhanced student consultation and engagement	
▪ Communications & engagement strategy ▪ Annual survey ▪ Consultation timeline and process ▪ Online form for ad hoc feedback and ideas ▪ Publication of fund allocations	▪ Increasing awareness of existing services and amenities ▪ Refresh online content with more user-oriented information and Q&A fact sheets ▪ Competitive market for new ideas
Benefits realisation	
▪ Making the most of what SSAF funds have and will be been invested in ▪ Maximising usage of existing services and amenities	▪ Identify, measure and communicate positive impacts of funded services and amenities ▪ Review of best practice consultation
Strategic program management	
▪ Project monitoring and controls ▪ Template project plans ▪ Fund allocation modelling ▪ Business case proposals	▪ Process simplification ▪ Fee structure analysis ▪ Explore options for sustainability ▪ Refreshed program management plan

FUNDING PRIORITIES

Based on feedback through consultation and student surveys, the SSAF committee has established a Strategic Framework to guide the allocation of SSAF funds to deliver a suitable mixture of immediate benefits for students and the achievement of long term strategic priorities. The strategic framework includes a four-tier system of funding priorities:

- building robust and resilient student engagement and elected student representation which is key to future UNE success
- phased development of longer term strategic initiatives that align with future-proofing UNE's vision: "Learning without limits"
- investment with immediate benefits, shorter term projects, and
- clubs and Societies capacity building & otherwise open to a bidding process.

The Strategic Framework underpins the allocation of SSAF funds and is applied in harmony with governance, financial management and accountability standards.

FEE STRUCTURE 2014

During 2014, off-campus and cross-institutional students were exempt from paying the fee for the full academic year. The fee was invoiced in two periods (trimester 1 & 2 or research period 1 & 2) except students enrolled in a year-long teaching period, in which case it was invoiced once at the annual rate.

Enrolment Type	*Full-Time Fee 2014*	*Part-Time Fee 2014*
Domestic On-Campus Coursework students	$281	$210
Domestic On-Campus Higher Degree Research students	$210	$157
International On-Campus students	$281	$210
Off-Campus students (100% online)	Exempt	Exempt
Cross-institutional students	Exempt	Exempt

The SSAF is indexed each year at an amount determined by the Australian Government. The maximum annual rate in 2015 has increased to $286, and part time students 75% thereof.

STUDENT CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

UNE engaged in a range of student consultation activities to support the effective implementation of the SSAF through genuine, meaningful and collaborative student consultation. The University continued its formal consultation process with students and their representative bodies to consider the specific uses and priorities for the allocation of student services and amenities fees. Consultation was conducted through a range of avenues, including: forums, surveys, regular feedback and the SSAF committee. Student consultation also includes:

- publishing identified priorities and individual projects for proposed fee expenditure and allowing a reasonable opportunity for students and student associations or organisations to comment on those priorities or projects, and
- regularly meeting with democratically elected student representatives, particularly through the governing SSAF Committee to consider and provide input to the priorities and specific uses of fee revenue.

During 2014, UNE conducted an online student consultation survey to gather ideas and feedback from all students. A number of key findings were generated by the survey, including:

- The top three preferences for the allocation of the SSAF for all on-campus and off-campus students are services and amenities related to: health & welfare, employment & careers and study skills. Also ranked in the top five for on-campus students are finances, accommodation, legal services, food & drink, orientation, advocacy, and sport.
- Preferred funding categories differ between on-campus and off-campus students. On-campus students rank finances, legal services, food & drink, sports, clubs and insurance more highly than off-campus students.
- Opportunities to target more specific services and amenities accessed via residential colleges, activity for on-campus higher degree research students and on-campus international students are being explored for 2015.

A copy of the survey report is available on the UNE website, including a comprehensive overview of the survey results and recommendations.

SERVICES AND AMENITIES FOR STUDENTS

The SSAF enabled the delivery of a range of benefits for students in 2014 by increasing the quality and quantity of student services and amenities. In response to extensive student consultation and feedback, a number of projects were continued and introduced during the year, delivering improvements to student spaces, sport and recreation activities, student media, orientation information, health and welfare, emergency support, representation and advocacy and significant growth in funding through student clubs and societies. The SSAF committee continued its work coordinating the allocation and management of the fee, making a significant contribution to quality of student experience at the University. During the year, UNE conducted a detailed benchmarking analysis of higher education providers across Australia, particularly those with similar course delivery modes to identify best practice opportunities for the implementation of the fee. The evaluation demonstrated a comprehensive approach to the management of the fee at UNE, meeting and exceeding all benchmarks, including the delivery of a range of student consultation and engagement activities and publication of comprehensive fee management data.

Student spaces and facilities

A range of upgrades and improvements to student spaces and facilities were delivered in 2014, providing safe and comfortable places for students to meet, collaborate and engage on campus:

- refurbishment of the old on-campus security area into a dedicated women's space, including lounge style seating and furniture, a desk and a small kitchen
- funding for the Earle Page College junior common room refurbishment
- contribution to the installation of four community kitchens into catered residential colleges, with the University to match this contribution with University funds
- new audio visual technology and furniture for Mary White College.

Exam breakfasts

What could be harder than exam day on an empty stomach! Funds from SSAF helped students prepare for this important part of university life through the provision of breakfasts during the exam period.

Uni4Me

A key interface with the student body, Uni4Me has continued to deliver a range of exciting student-led activities and social events across the calendar year, including extended orientation activities to continue the university's well established student collegiality.

Blue shirt volunteers

Assistance was delivered for the continuation of on-campus help and support activities provided to students by the Blue Shirts Volunteers program.

Bike racks

What better way is there to get to class than by bike? We agree, that's why we will be installing a new set of bike racks near the library to cater for more bicycles and more students, once they reach the top of the hill.

Student orientation

Acknowledging orientation as an integral part in the transition to university life, support was provided through student orientation activities, including enhancements to the lifesaver days, orientation catering, Uni4Me events, student-led activities and social events, and SSAF informational material.

Water fountains

Fund allocations were made during 2014 for the installation of new filtered water stations around the campus to keep students hydrated and cool. Construction will commence in 2015.

Water bottles

If you attended orientation on-campus in 2015, you might have been lucky enough to receive your metallic SSAF branded water bottle.

Off-campus fee exemption

During the year, the UNE Vice-Chancellor and CEO continued the fee exemption for all off-campus students.

Music, arts and events

Base sound equipment and musical instruments were provided to support the growth and development of UNE's emerging live music scene. Funding was provided for the continuation of the music in the courtyard project.

Well Fair Day

Following its initial success, SSAF enabled the continuation of the second annual Well Fair Day, featuring a free BBQ, magician, petting zoo, interactive sculpture, face painting, and jumping castle. A day to enjoy for students, while accessing health and welfare information and services, Well Fair Day was another success in 2014.

Tune FM

One of Australia's longest running student radio stations, Tune FM is an exciting production of student media at UNE. Support for the radio station and a comprehensive range of new technology and equipment was delivered in 2014.

Nucleus

Nucleus is the University's student newspaper available online and in print each month. Written for students, by students, the publication covers a range of issues and creative articles that distill university life. The development and publication of Nucleus is made possible with support provided by the SSAF and is available to all students of the University.

UNE Medical Centre

Ensuring the health and welfare of students at UNE is taken care of, the operation of the UNE Medical Centre is an important student service and amenity.

Emergency support

An allocation for emergency financial or other support is made available to students through UNESA to provide help and assistance for students in times of crisis or emergency.

Sport & recreation

Maintaining a healthy and active life is made easier and more affordable with support provided for the operation of Sport UNE and a range of supporting services and amenities for members of the gym.

Scholarships

A new legacy student scholarship fund to generate stronger collegiality between graduating students and to foster strengthened engagement across the UNE alumnus was delivered in 2014.

Clubs and societies

Clubs and societies are an integral part to the allocation of the SSAF and an excellent way for student to engage directly in the delivery of services and amenities. In 2014 funding provided through clubs and societies was expanded and for the first time managed by a dedicated clubs & societies subcommittee, supporting a range of activities and around 40 clubs and societies. Funding was also provided for governance training and club development. Funding for clubs and societies underpin the broad and diverse fraternity at UNE.

New technology

Ensuring students continue to have access to the best possible technology, a range of upgrades were provided during the year to support student-led services and amenities, including:

- upgrade IT equipment for UNESA teams and services, including IT software and hardware for the independent student advocates and new equipment for Tune FM, and
- wireless installation project to increase high speed coverage across the campus.

Supporting international students

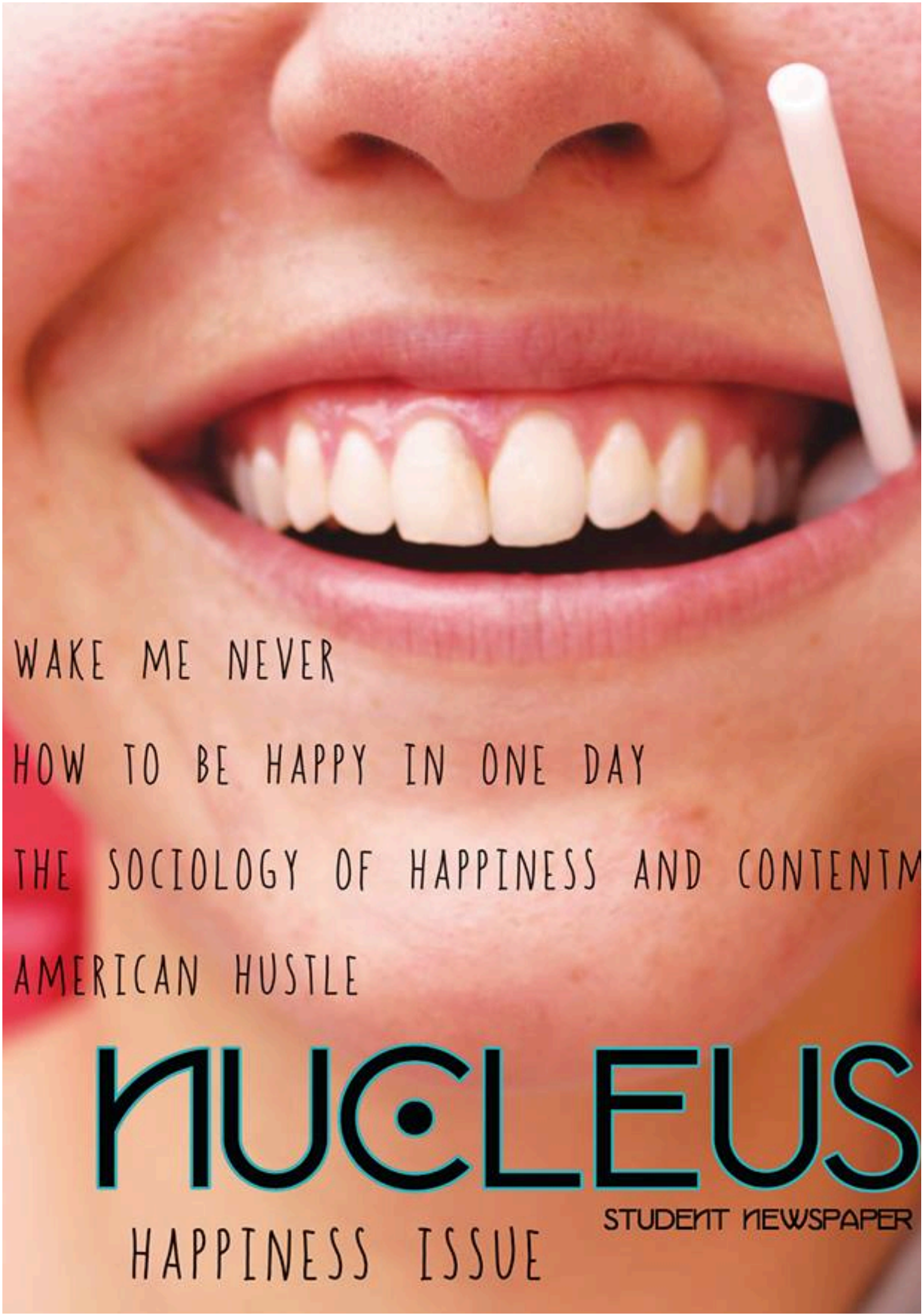
For the second consecutive year, Armidale International Association and UNE International have collaboratively delivered a series of exciting activities specifically designed for international students. Gaining a first-hand experience of Armidale's unique natural wonders and a chance to network with other students, this project continues to be very popular with students.

Student representation and advocacy

Students can access or be a part of UNE's Student Association, UNESA, for a range of services including advocacy in matters arising under UNE's rules.

Courtyard refurbishment

Funds have been allocated to the needed refurbishment of the courtyard, painting has commenced with completion to occur in early 2015.



WAKE ME NEVER

HOW TO BE HAPPY IN ONE DAY

THE SOCIOLOGY OF HAPPINESS AND CONTENTM

AMERICAN HUSTLE

NUCLEUS

STUDENT NEWSPAPER

HAPPINESS ISSUE

GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The collection and use of SSAF funds are governed by Commonwealth legislation and guidelines, in particular the Higher Education Support Act and its Administrative Guidelines. The SSAF committee oversees compliance with legislative requirements and the coordination of a genuine, meaningful and collaborative consultation with the student body. Fees charged throughout the year were consistent with the maximum allowable amount of $281, and 74.7% thereof for part time students. External students were exempt from paying the SSAF in 2014. SSAF fees are published before October each prior year, with total proceeds at $1,072,700 in 2014. Allocations are made in consideration of the SSAF strategic framework and funding priorities, with all proposals published on the UNE website and adhering to the expenditure categories and funding provisions.

SSAF Governance

Key elements of the SSAF Governance Structure

Higher Education Legislation Amendment (Student Services and Amenities) Act 2011
Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy Guidelines
HESA Administration Guidelines
UNE Rules, Codes, Policies and Procedures
SSAF Committee Terms of Reference

All funded services or amenities are assigned unique activity codes with expenditure closely monitored and acquitted on a cost basis. A range of internal financial controls are used, consistent with the broader financial management and accountability standards across the University. Governance training is provided regularly to support and enhance the operation of UNESA. The SSAF committee convened monthly throughout 2014, with several other meetings occurring to support the efficient and effective delivery of services and amenities. Decision making by the committee is underpinned by a strategic framework consisting of funding priorities, 19 allowable expenditure categories, student consultation and engagement results, UNE Strategic Plan, benchmarking with other Australian universities and expert advice provided by the SSAF committee.

FINANCIAL REPORT

2014 Student Services and Amenities Fee Expenditure to 31 December 2014

Description and expenditure type	*2014 Expenditure*	*2014 Allocation*
(a) Food or drink		
Exam breakfasts	5,683	15,000
UNE Life social events	21,889	22,000
Wright Centre	-	500,000
Total food or drink	**27,572**	**537,000**
(b) Sport and recreation		
Sport UNE external access	10,000	10,000
Bikes & Racks	-	12,000
UNE Life intensives support	4,999	17,100
Blue Shirt Volunteers	2,574	6,000
Music Courtyard	11,466	35,000
Courtyard refurbishment	-	150,000
Sport UNE capacity building	225,113	227,197
Tune FM	79,771	75,000
Bistro refurbishment	-	50,000
Total sport and recreation	**333,923**	**582,297**
(c) Clubs		
Undergraduate Association	(1,621)	-
Mums @ UNE	(2,285)	-
UNESA EO (FT)	88,187	95,000
Clubs & Societies	80,829	222,337
NEW Law Students operational expenses	-	(166)
UNESA operations	103,954	109,000
UNESA honorarium student website	10,085	10,400
UNESA Clubs and Societies coordinator	50,030	46,000
Refurbishment of student spaces	32,683	120,000
UNESA honorarium (president)	37,500	37,500
Student mobile application "The Box"	3,500	7,200
Total clubs	**402,861**	**647,271**
(f) Health and welfare		
On campus student medical care	170,000	170,000
UNE Life health promotion	9,912	13,000
UNESA Projects Emergency Fund	542	10,000
Total Health and welfare	**180,454**	**193,000**
(h) Employment and careers		
Career development	19,626	250,000
Total Employment and careers	**19,626**	**250,000**

(l) Libraries			
	Library Postage, advocates & UNESA	72,523	75,000
	Second hand book post	4,320	5,000
	Total Libraries	**76,843**	**80,000**
(m) Artistic			
	Arts project	635	-
	Piano & PA	15,666	20,000
	Total Artistic	**16,301**	**20,000**
(n) Student media			
	Nucleus: provision of a student newspaper	63,802	99,490
	Total Student media	**63,802**	**99,490**
(q) Advocate interests			
	SSAF project management	102,353	110,000
	Independent student advocates	57,711	89,000
	Distance Ed Free Park Intensives	21,187	21,187
	Services UNE website	3,527	-
	Intensive schools transport	33,315	100,000
	Practical placement name badges	3,452	14,500
	Branding UNESA expanded roles	10,000	10,000
	UNESA IT upgrades	34,342	30,000
	UNE wireless installation contribution	330,861	400,000
	Enhance Mary White amenity	5,071	20,000
	SSAF diary and planners	15,208	30,000
	Install water stations	-	100,000
	Student Scholarships	60,000	60,000
	S4S national leadership conference	9,293	10,000
	Total Advocate interests	**686,320**	**994,687**
(r) Orientation			
	Resourcing future UNE orientation programs	44,106	50,000
	Total Orientation	**44,106**	**50,000**
(s) Overseas needs			
	International student BBQs	-	10,000
	Armidale International Association (park visits)	3,700	10,000
	Trimester 3 activities	733	3,054
	Total Overseas needs	**4,433**	**23,054**
Contingency for 2014-15			
	Contingency for 2014-15	-	3,018
	Total contingency for 2014-15	-	3,018
GRAND TOTAL		**1,856,242**	**3,479,816**

NOTES

Allocations generally exceed expenditure for a number of items due to projects being delivered across multiple years and contingency allowances. In this case, allocations are made on a total project cost basis, whereas service delivery operating costs are calculated on an annual basis, for example Tune FM. Care has been taken to ensure the accuracy and integrity of data contained within this report. A full copy of the 2014 Student Consultation Survey Report, and further information regarding the implementation and management of the fee is available on the UNE website, go to *study* > *student services and amenities fee*.

Contact Details

Queries regarding the contents of this report should be directed to the SSAF project manager:

SSAF Project Manager
Strategic Projects Group
University of New England

Email: ssaf@une.edu.au

www.une.edu.au
www.une.edu.au/strategicprojects

25 February 2015

General student enquiries should be directed to **UNE Student Support** by telephone: 02 6773 2897 or email at: studentsupport@une.edu.au

Image credits, in order of appearance: students participating in the Armidale International Association Park Visits, results from the SSAF survey in word art, photos from orientation 2015, Nucleus magazine cover.

Please consider the environment before printing this document.