

Student Services and Amenities Fee



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

Challenges, Change and Innovation

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A presentation to TEMC 2015

Overview

- Background to the SSAF
- Consultation framework
- The sector-wide view
- Managing the SSAF
- Opportunities to support change and innovation
- Challenges
- SSAF and capital works
- Concluding remarks

SSAF Background and Legislation

- Coalition govt enacted VSU legislation in 2005, effective from 1 July 2006
- Labor govt introduced SSAF in 2011 to provide funding for a range of non-academic services and amenity to students
- **Key issue:** Unlike previous compulsory student fees (eg. General Services Charge etc):
 - SSAF revenue does not flow exclusively to student associations (there is no guarantee or 'right' of access to SSAF funds for student groups)
 - services may be delivered through student associations or entities and internal units of the university, **or** an external provider engaged by the university
 - The HEP determines who delivers services
 - the university (HEP) is responsible to ensure the quality of services delivered
 - legislation requires that the HEP provide opportunity for students and student entities to make comment on priorities for expenditure



Approved SSAF categories

- Providing food or drink to students on a campus of the higher education provider;
- Supporting a sporting or other recreational activity by students;
- Supporting the administration of a club most of whose members are students;
- Caring for children of students;
- Providing legal services to students;
- Promoting the health or welfare of students;
- Helping students secure accommodation;
- Helping students obtain employment or advice on careers;
- Helping students with their financial affairs;
- Helping students obtain insurance against personal accidents;
- Supporting debating by students;
- Providing libraries and reading rooms (other than those provided for academic purposes) for students;
- Supporting an artistic activity by students;
- Supporting the production and dissemination to students of media whose content is provided by students;
- Helping students develop skills for study, by means other than undertaking courses of study in which they are enrolled;
- Advising on matters arising under the higher education provider's rules (however described);
- Advocating students' interests in matters arising under the higher education provider's rules (however described);
- Giving students information to help them in their orientation; and
- Helping meet the specific needs of overseas students relating to their welfare, accommodation and employment

Across the sector

- Online reporting
- Variation in reporting and use of the SSAF
- Challenge of supporting online and distance students
- Role of student associations and unions in delivering services under SSAF
- Use of SSAF to fund capital works
- Sharing of information and experiences



UoN Consultative Framework

The legislation requires formal process of student consultation and opportunity for students and student associations, to ‘comment’ on priorities

- **SSAF Student Consultative Group (SCG)**
 - formally elected student members and nominated (elected student) representatives of student entities
 - no UON staff are members, but chaired by UON Director
 - the SCG does not ‘approve’ SSAF priorities or expenditure
- **Student Entities Consultative Group (ECG)**
 - Elected student president/director and manager/administrator of each student entity/association
 - meets at least twice per year following SSAFSCG to discuss priorities and future initiatives
- **Internal service providers**
 - Consulted in parallel with SCG and ECG meetings
- **SSAF Management Group**
 - Chaired by DVC(A), comprises key UON senior staff
 - endorses the proposed priorities for use of SSAF revenue for subsequent year, following consultation with SCG, ECG and UON internal areas
 - oversees alignment of SSAF with University priorities

Managing the SSAF

- Using SSAF to improve services and drive behavioural change
- Withholding SSAF funding from student association(s) – implications
- Formal Agreements (contracts) for delivery of services
- Internal audit of student associations and their use of SSAF revenue
- Improving governance of student entities and associations
- ‘Jobs on Campus’ – delivering value back to students



Driving change and innovation

- Governance training to improve management and accountability of student associations, clubs and societies
- Student advocacy:
 - Establishment of the Office of Student Advocacy
 - 400+ individual student cases in 2014
 - January-August 2015, supported 360 individual students
 - Provides support for students from all campuses and delivery modes
 - Brokering outcomes relating to retrospective adverse circumstances, show cause, change of grade requests, remission of fees, assessment and placement issues etc
 - High level of student satisfaction
- The 'little things' count:
 - Library 'Winter Warmers'
 - Library rovers (24/7) student peer support
 - Yak TV and social media
 - IT pop-up clinics for orientation
- 'Free bikes!' (well, near enough, only \$50)



late night winter warmers

Ask Staff at Library Service Zone

THIS PROJECT FUNDED BY
SSAF



Using SSAF for capital works

- Engaging students in the discussion about priorities and projects
- What is a reasonable balance between capital and services spending?













Challenges and concluding comments

- The legislation and long-term
 - What happens if ?
- Long on promise, short on delivery
 - Holding people (and organisational units) to account
- Duplication, lack of cooperation across organisational units and entities
- Equity and fairness for all students
- Providing quality services for online or distance students
- Developing a 'community of interest'
- Ensuring meaningful consultation and engagement



Thank you

DISCUSSION

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