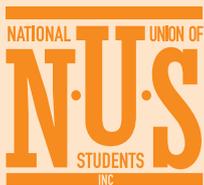


NUS REPORT INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDENT SERVICES AND AMENITIES FEE 2013



October 2013



This National Union of Students (NUS) publication was created, printed and distributed on Aboriginal lands. These lands were never ceded. NUS acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of these lands, and pays our respect to Elders past and present.

National Union of Students Inc.
Suite 64, Trades Hall
54 Victoria Street
Carlton South
Victoria 3053
www.unistudent.com.au

National Union of Students Inc Authorised by Jade Tyrrell, NUS President 2013

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Section 1: The Context

1.1 President's Foreword

The Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) has bolstered many university student organisations and student services across the country since its introduction last year. In many cases, it has allowed for the establishment or re-establishment of student services and amenities and has facilitated improvements to pre-existing ones. In some cases, services have been transitioned back to student control after the damaging period of Voluntary Student Unionism (VSU) that saw the collapse of student organisations and a noticeable decline in university campus life.

The National Union of Students (NUS) has consistently pushed for changes to improve the SSAF legislation and associated guidelines to ensure our universities are implementing the SSAF fairly.

At the beginning of this year the Federal Government through the then Minister for Tertiary Education Chris Evans announced a review into the SSAF Guidelines associated with the SSAF legislation. Universities, student organisations and peak bodies in the sector contributed submissions to a review panel, which I had the honour of sitting on. The report of the panel and subsequent amendments to the Guidelines approved by the then Minister for Higher Education Sharon Bird go to improving the transparency and accountability of the SSAF for the benefit of students and universities.

The amendments to the Guidelines recommended by the panel were introduced in both houses of Federal Parliament prior to the Federal Election this year. I am hopeful they will apply from January 2014 as planned.

It is important we continue to monitor the implementation of the SSAF and how it is tracking across the country, as there is always room for improvement. This NUS report has been compiled in the second year of SSAF implementation due to the success of and interest in the 2012 NUS report and the requests NUS received across the country from universities, students and student organisations for more support and updated information on the implementation of the SSAF and how it has played out across Australia.

Similar to the first report, this is based on information taken from the SSAF Questionnaire that was collected from campus presidents in the first half of the year, on workshops run with campus presidents at NUS Presidents' Summit and Education Conference, in addition to the objective data that was collected by the NUS Research Officer, Graham Hastings, with feedback and clarification provided by campus presidents. This report also ranks universities and their handling of the SSAF and the support they have shown for independent student organisations to encourage improvements in student-run services and activities.

It is so important for student organisations to have the support of their universities throughout the SSAF process and in general so I would like to thank the Vice-Chancellors who made a contribution to this report by offering their thoughts in this regard: Professor Glyn Davis (University of Melbourne), Professor Sandra Harding (James Cook University), Professor John Dewar (La Trobe University), Professor Ross Milbourne (University of Technology, Sydney), Professor Richard Higgott (Murdoch University) and Professor Peter Curtis (University of Western Australia).

I would also like to sincerely thank all the student organisations and their presidents who took the time to participate in the NUS survey. Without your co-operation and input this report would not have been possible, and it is extremely rewarding to see this report take shape with your assistance. I hope that this report will be useful and will help to improve the students' experience of the SSAF on your campus.

Thank you to the NUS national office bearers for your continued support, and to Graham Hastings, the NUS Research Coordinator, who has made this report possible with his wealth of institutional knowledge and dedication.

A positive and successful university experience is substantially aided by the availability of crucial support services on campus and a vibrant campus culture. Overwhelmingly, students and campuses as a whole have benefited significantly from the existence of the SSAF, and NUS will continue to encourage universities to allocate SSAF funds to independent student organisations. Those who would seek its removal, particularly on ideological grounds, should reconsider their position in light of the substantial growth in campus life and the tangible improvements to the student experience that have been a direct result of its introduction.

JADE TYRRELL

1.2 Vice-Chancellors on SSAF and Supporting Students and their Student Organisations

“SSAF funds have increased significantly the resources available for programs and initiatives aimed at supporting students and enhancing their experience of university. The majority of SSAF funds have been provided to student organisations at the University of Melbourne, enabling amongst other things increased numbers of student clubs and societies and a highly effective Student Union Advocacy Service. SSAF funding has also increased access to University-provided services, including Sport, Children’s Services, an outreach Student Connect program, and Students @ Work (an initiative to employ more students on campus). At the University of Melbourne SSAF is supporting around 100 families access discounted childcare services in August 2013. Of those using our University provided services, around 40% are on 100% Child Care Benefit which means they had an income of less than \$41,000. SSAF allows the University to provide half days and semester only services, allowing students to pay for what they use rather than a full year’s service which is the industry norm. This flexibility greatly assists students manage study and parental duties in a cost effective fashion.”

**Professor Glyn Davis AC, Vice-Chancellor,
University of Melbourne**

“The SSAF plays an important role in both providing extra essential services for our students and supporting student organisations in their efforts to provide complementary and advocacy services. Vibrant and well-supported student organisations are essential for universities in the modern era because it is important that universities listen to and learn from students. Student organisations provide that voice and serve as a critical source of student opinion. Student unions and associations have organising capability and can mobilise students. They tell us what we need to know whether we like it or not. But they cannot do these things unless they receive strong and enduring moral and material support.”

**Professor Sandra Harding, Vice-Chancellor,
James Cook University**

“La Trobe attaches great importance to the existence of lively and independent student-run clubs and societies. They add richness and depth to life on campus in a way that the University could not match on its own. They also provide students with an opportunity to develop leadership and business skills that will set them in good stead for life

after University. The funding flowing from SSAF has been an important enabler of this support – although La Trobe had previously provided funds from its own budget to cover the lost revenue flowing from the introduction of VSU, often at the cost of funding other programs.”

Professor John Dewar, Vice-Chancellor, La Trobe University

“SSAF funding has been essential for student services and amenities, to enrich the educational experience and provide students with social activities and networking which improved their career prospects. It has allowed us to better integrate students from different backgrounds and give them educational experiences they would not otherwise enjoy.”

**Professor Ross Milbourne, Vice-Chancellor, University of
Technology Sydney**

“Murdoch University is very pleased to be recognised as one of the top 10 universities nationally for the implementation of SSAF. SSAF funding underpins a range of essential services offered to students and we work closely with The Guild to provide an excellent student experience in the most appropriate and cost effective way possible. We strongly believe that some services (such as independent advocacy and support for student representation) can only be offered effectively at arms-length from the University by a student-led body. Moreover the opportunities to organise and lead such services are essential to the development of student leadership and other key skills for employability”.

**Professor Richard Higgott, Vice-Chancellor,
Murdoch University**

“The UWA position is to be a strong supporter of our Student Guild as the single point of contact between the University and the student body. We have a historically close working relationship and we have supported universal SSAF to protect the viability of a strong, independent student organisation and associated student services. SSAF income is shared between the University, the Guild and the Sports Association on a one third each basis after a 10% allocation for student amenities capital funds. The Guild and Sports allocations are governed by formal Service Level Agreements for accountability purposes, and the priorities of all three recipients are negotiated at University Exec level before recommending to the governing body.”

**Professor Peter Curtis, Registrar,
University of Western Australia**

1.3 Glossary of Terms

HEPS:

Higher Education Providers, this includes universities and accredited non-university providers.

VSU:

Voluntary Student Unionism, in this report this refers primarily to the *Higher Education (Abolition of Compulsory up-front Student Union Fees) Act 2005* which introduced voluntary membership and fee payment on a federal level. There have been various other previous legislative models for voluntary student unionism on a state/territory level.

SSAF:

Student Services and Amenities Fee is the university fee created by *Higher Education Legislation Amendment (Student Services and Amenities) Act 2010*.

NATIONAL STUDENT REPRESENTATION PROTOCOLS:

These are ministerial guidelines created under the *Higher Education Legislation Amendment (Student Services and Amenities) Act 2010* to allow for student involvement in consultations over SSAF allocations.

1.4 SSAF Report Background

This report details student representative perspectives on the operation and effectiveness of the Student Services and Amenities Fee legislation and associated guidelines during its second year of implementation.

Following the passage of the *Higher Education (Abolition of Compulsory up-front Student Union Fees) Act 2005* in December 2005 Australia became the first country in the Organisation for Economic Co-ordination and Development to legislate for a prohibition on universities collecting a universal student contribution to provide for non-academic student services and student representative functions. Similar legislation in the form of the Acts Amendment (*Student Guilds and Associations) Act 1994* had operated in Western Australia from 1994 – 2001 before being partially repealed.

In other countries the contribution is typically uncontroversial and is collected either as part of the overall tuition fee or allocated as part of a government grant in countries with free education or minimal student fees. The student amenities fee is an identified separate fee from tuition in only a few countries such as the USA, New Zealand and Canada. In England only second degree, international and higher degree students pay the fee (the government grant/tuition fee covers the cost for domestic undergraduates). In these countries the fee level is left to universities to determine. The comparable 2013 compulsory non-academic fees (i.e., minus tuition, health insurance and residential fees) in research or training universities in these countries tend to be much higher than the \$273 indexed SSAF in Australia, for example:

- Oxford University (UK, public): domestic postgraduates or second degree students pay £2659, overseas students pay £6,465;
- Harvard University (USA, private): \$US 2,443;
- University of Illinois (USA, public): \$US 1508;
- University of British Columbia (Can, public): \$CAN881 - \$1654; and
- Victoria University (NZ, public): \$NZ690 internal, \$NZ345 external)

The legislation is somewhat misleadingly called voluntary student unionism legislation (VSU). It not only bans student organisations fees but it also bans universities from collecting student fees to cover the costs of running university owned non-academic services and facilities. Voluntary student unionism proponents at the time argued that the VSU legislation would make student organisations deliver services that students wanted and that student organisations would still be financially viable through voluntary membership fees and profits from commercial activities.

The reality proved to be somewhat different. It had become clear by 2007 that the revenue from voluntary fees and commercial trading would not be enough to sustain comprehensive student service, campus life and representative activities. Universities faced the choice of either allowing these student-controlled activities to diminish or to finance them through substantial or total direct funding from the university. Typically, the funding and operations of student organisations became more tightly defined through limited term service level agreement contracts.

There was considerable variation in the willingness and financial capacity of different university administrations to provide this financial support. Students at regional campuses in particular faced the biggest loss of services and

student voice. The National Union of Students has been tracking the changes and since 2007 has also produced campus rankings about the negotiations and the level of funding support arising from these service level contracts.

The VSU legislation has also led to a major transfer of services and facilities that were historically student-run to the direct control of universities. These are outlined in Appendix Two of this report. VSU also led to a weakening of the resources to support effective student representative structures. The detrimental impact of this transition was most acute at regional campuses such as the University of Ballarat, Charles Sturt University, Southern Cross University, University of the Sunshine Coast, University of New England and Charles Darwin University.

The Higher Education Legislation Amendment (Student Services and Amenities) Act 2010, while preserving the voluntary membership provisions, restored the power of higher education providers to collect a universal student contribution for a prescribed list of student services and amenities. The SSAF was collected for the first time in 2012.

Unlike the pre-2005 arrangements the SSAF is deferrable through HECS-like arrangements (and unlike the up-front arrangements in operation elsewhere in the world), the maximum fee level that may be charged by a university is capped (and indexed annually) and the list of allowable uses of the fee does not include student representative activities.

Although student representative activities cannot be funded from the SSAF revenue, the Act does create regulations that create a set of minimal obligations on higher education providers to allow for some system of student representation and student elections for students to be able to participate in consultations over the university allocation of SSAF revenue. These are the National Student Representative Protocols.

In 2011 NUS produced the booklet “The Student Services and Amenities Fee: A Guide To Best Practice” that focused on examples of good service and student representative provision at particular campuses to help with negotiations on the use of the SSAF.

At the end of 2011, NUS and its affiliates committed to conducting a rating exercise measuring how committed universities were to engagement with students around the expenditure of the SSAF revenue and the provision of student services, advocacy and representation. This became the NUS Report into the Implementation of Student Services and Amenities Fee 2012. Mindful of the evidence-based approach of the Rudd-Gillard Government the report was based on:

- A comprehensive questionnaire that campus presidents were asked to fill out to provide details about the consultation and negotiation processes with their universities and the funding outcomes;
- A comprehensive audit of the services, amenities, and representation on offer at each campus. The audit identified which services are being offered by student organisations, those being offered by universities (or their service companies), and those that are being offered by private providers; and
- University rankings derived from a clearly-defined methodology

The 2012 report had the desired impact in that the Federal Government announced the establishment of a ministerial working party to review the National Student Representation Protocols during 2013. The panel consisted of the Hon. Arch Bevis as chair, Professor Alan Pettigrew (former UNE Vice Chancellor representing Universities Australia) and Jade Tyrrell (NUS President). The review substantially redrafted the guidelines *inter alia*:

- To clarify the role of elected student representatives of independent student organisations in the SSAF consultation processes;
- To clarify whether universities were compelled by the guidelines to conduct their own elections for student representatives to take part in the SSAF consultation;
- To strengthen the independent employment status of academic rights advocacy staff;
- To improve transparency of university reporting of SSAF expenditure to the student body (including annual reporting requirements).

At the time of publication the revised guidelines were before the Commonwealth Parliament.

This report, which covers 2013 and late 2012 negotiations, builds upon all previous work conducted by NUS. It follows a similar methodology to the 2012 report although some of the survey questions were tweaked to clarify responses and to include extra categories in student representation and independence. The number of campus presidents taking part in the survey increased from 25 in 2012 to 31 in this report.

1.5 List of 2013 SSAF Questionnaire Participants

This report has been able to build upon the work done in the 2012 report and this year it includes participants from every state and territory. We have been able to grow the 26 participants in 2012 to 31 in 2013.

Whilst every effort was made to engage with every campus across the country, as with the 2012 Report, respondents were weighted towards the student organisations engaged with other campus representatives through NUS involvement.

The experiences of non-participating student representatives on campuses with minimal resources and isolated from the experiences of other campus student representatives may be substantially different.

THE 31 PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS:

- Adelaide University Union
- ANU Students Association
- Central Coast Campus Union (Newcastle –Ourimbah)
- Central Queensland University Students Association
- Charles Darwin University Students Association
- Curtin University Student Guild
- Edith Cowan Student Guild
- Flinders University Students Association
- Griffith University Arts SRC
- Griffith University SRC (all campuses except Gold Coast)
- James Cook University Students Association
- La Trobe Student Union
- LEXUS (Lismore and External Undergraduate Student Association) Southern Cross University
- Monash Students Association (Clayton)
- Monash University Gippsland Student Union
- Murdoch University Student Guild
- Newcastle University Students Association
- RMIT Student Union
- Southern Cross University – Coffs Harbour Students Association
- Swinburne Student Union
- Sydney University SRC
- Tasmania University Union
- University of Melbourne Student Union
- University of New England Students' Association
- University of South Australia Student Association
- University of NSW Arc
- University of Sunshine Coast Student Guild
- UTS Students' Association
- University of WA Student Guild
- Victoria University Student Union
- Wollongong University Students Association



1.6 Executive Summary

1. CONTEXT

The Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) was charged for the first time in 2012. Unlike the pre-2006 arrangements, the fee revenue can only be used for a prescribed list of campus services and not for student representation. There is no requirement for universities to provide any SSAF funding to student run organisations, but they may choose to do so.

This is the second NUS report addressing the implementation of the SSAF. The report is based on an audit of student control of student services at all universities and a comprehensive questionnaire filled out by 31 campus student organisation presidents. This information was used to generate the NUS Student Control of Student Affairs university rankings outlined in Section Six.

The period of Voluntary Student Unionism transformed the historic student service arrangements at Australian universities. Hundreds of millions of dollars of student run assets and facilities were transferred to university control. Campus life and student representative structures were detrimentally affected, and in some cases collapsed at smaller and regional universities that did not have the discretionary financial resources to support core student services and representation via service level contract agreements.

2. AUDIT OF STUDENT CONTROL OF STUDENT SERVICES

Our 2013 audit of campus services shows that most common services that continue to be student run include: student newspapers, academic rights and university rules advocacy services, sporting and non-sporting clubs, concerts and university diaries.

The most common services run jointly with the university include: orientation activities, international student support, welfare and bookshops.

3. SSAF PROCESSES: CONSULTATIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS

Universities are required to consult with students over the allocation of SSAF revenue.

The most common forms of consultations with elected student representatives were: university committees, one to one meetings and opportunities for student representatives to present proposals. Only 22% of survey respondents recommended their university consultation process as an example of best practice (down from 38% in 2012).

Issues raised included: lack of transparency, composition of consultative committees, university pre-determination of the outcomes of consultation, time and resources for students to develop alternative resources, a need for formalised time-frames for consultations/negotiations, and ambiguity over the role of student organisations in the consultation processes.

Consultation with the wider student body occurred primarily through online surveys. Some universities also used focus groups and forums. There was a drop in survey ratings about whether the consultations represented “best practice” (from 17% in 2012, to 12 % in 2013).

Issues raised included: consultation with student body not done, poor timing of consultations (i.e. during university breaks), tokenism, lack of recognition of student diversity, lack of context and transparency due to minimal information provided to students, the need for other forms of consultation and also results ignored.

There is no explicit requirement for universities to negotiate with student organisations or the student body over the use of the SSAF. Most responses indicated the majority of universities did so, but 26% of respondents reported that their negotiations were non-existent or poor. The major issues raised were associated with the exclusion of student organisation representatives from negotiations or the harmful impact of long delays in finalising funding outcomes that extended into the teaching year.

NUS makes the following recommendations to improve campus SSAF processes:

Recommendation One: NUS recommends that representatives from the major campus student organisations (where they exist) must be included in the SSAF consultation and negotiation processes.

Recommendation Two: NUS recommends that the SSAF committee have a majority of student representatives, or that university representation and student representation be at least equal. University representatives should not outnumber student representatives.

Recommendation Three: NUS recommends that all universities produce a document and material for distribution to the student body that clearly explains what the SSAF is, updated fee amounts and how it is being spent with references to all SSAF-funded student organisations/ university run services on campus and what they provide as a result of the SSAF, to be put on university websites and sent out to students via an all-student email.

Recommendation Four: NUS recommends:

(a) That communication from universities to students about SSAF and its expenditure be checked by student representatives to ensure that it is comprehensible to students.

(b) That universities and student organisations annually collaborate to refine the plans for consultation with the student body. Consultation can include but is not limited to surveys, forums, and focus groups with web pages, social media, student media and all-student e-mails to promote the process.

Recommendation Five: NUS recommends that consultation with the student body occur before the end of October of each year and that that funding outcomes from the consultation/negotiations be concluded by the following February.

Recommendation Six: NUS recommends that all consultations, discussions and negotiations held regarding the division and expenditure of the Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) in which student representatives, student organisation representatives and/or the university participate in, that all parties must act in good faith, and in the best interests of the students.

4. SSAF OUTCOMES

This NUS study has found that funding agreements between universities and student organisations were evenly split between single year and multi-year arrangements. There were greater delays in finalising these agreements in 2013 compared to 2012.

The introduction of the SSAF has also not necessarily led to a generalised return of the pre-VSU student estate to student organisations. In terms of who runs particular student services, the common response is that either that the VSU-era status quo has been maintained or that it has not been discussed (55% in 2012 and 2013). Only 24% of respondents reported that either some services had been transferred back to student control or that plans were at least being developed with the university for such transfers. 21% of respondents reported that their university is or is planning to take over further student-run services.

Where the transfers to student organisations have occurred they have not been for the major infrastructure assets owned by pre-VSU student organisations (i.e., buildings, retail operations, sporting facilities). Instead, they have been for important but lower cost services such as: academic rights, legal or welfare advocacy, student newspapers, clubs and arts/cultural services.

The 2013 survey shows that only four respondents (13%) reported that student-run organisations at their university received most (i.e. more than 50%) of the SSAF revenue collected. Two reported that no student organisation at their university received any SSAF revenue. This does not include the University of Ballarat (now part of Federation University) and Macquarie University that do not currently have independent student representative organisations.

5. STUDENT REPRESENTATION AND INDEPENDENCE

Student representation activities need to be considered separately from the SSAF legislation, as they are not on the list of nineteen allowable expenditures. Instead these activities are funded by separate service level funding contracts with universities drawing from non-SSAF revenues and are often regulated by conformity to key performance indicators negotiated with the university.

The SSAF legislation created ministerial guidelines (National Student Representation Protocols) to set some minimal requirements on all higher education providers to provide opportunities for elected student representation and some financial resource allocation to be able to participate in the SSAF consultation process. The SSAF Student Representation Guidelines create no obligation for universities to fund student representative organisations outside of the SSAF consultation process.

Student representative participation in university decision-making continues to be valued at most universities. 81% of respondents reported that democratically elected student representatives were either “heavily involved” or “quite involved” in their university decision-making processes.

Most of the responding student organisations have maintained a system where some student office bearers receive honoraria for performing substantial duties for their organisation (see Appendix Four for details). The exceptions with a solely volunteer model are at Griffith University, University of New England, University of Sunshine Coast and Southern Cross University. 89% of respondents supported the proposition that office bearer honoraria makes (or would make) it possible for student representatives to do their job more effectively. Similarly 90% of respondents supported the view that the honoraria makes (or would make it) possible for students from a greater diversity of backgrounds to become involved.

The ministerial guidelines in operation at the time of this survey contain some ambiguities regarding student representative elections and their involvement in the SSAF consultation:

- Are the democratically elected student representatives only those who serve in SSAF consultation processes or can this funding requirement be extended more generally to student organisation elections?
- Are universities required to conduct their own separate elections for the student representatives to participate in the SSAF consultation process?
- Can the representatives required for the SSAF consultation be drawn directly from elected student representatives of existing student organisations (i.e. appointed onto the SSAF consultation committee)?

A ministerial review (which included the 2013 NUS President on the panel) drafted several changes to the guidelines that give the universities greater clarity that they can appoint student organisation representatives to SSAF consultation committees and thus would not be required to run separate elections. The result of the passage of these re-drafted guidelines through parliament was unknown at time of publication. If passed, the new guidelines will take effect from 1 January 2014.

Many student representatives feel that under the SSAF arrangements they are compromised in their capacity to independently represent their members' interests against the university administration lest they risk losing funding (either the university grant or the SSAF-eligible activities the organisation may run). In a few cases there have been explicit threats to funding, but more commonly the implied threat leads to this feeling and self-censorship. Issues raised include the differing attitudes of university executives to student representations (some positive, some hostile), increased reporting requirements and excessive micro managing by the university, and university-imposed restructuring of student organisations.

6. NUS STUDENT CONTROL OF STUDENT AFFAIRS RANKINGS

The 'Student Control of Student Affairs' university rankings are weighted by the range of student-controlled services (40%), the level of student representation resourcing (40%) and the quality of consultations and negotiations with the relevant university regarding future transfer of services (20%). More details on the methodology and the full table are provided in Section Six.

The top 10 ranked universities (out of a score 10) are:

- University of Sydney: 8.6
- University of Melbourne: 8.1
- University of NSW: 7.8
- University of Technology, Sydney: 7.8
- University of Western Australia: 7.8
- Curtin University 7.4
- James Cook University 7.3
- La Trobe University 7.3
- Murdoch University 7.3
- Australian National University 7.2





Section 2: Who Runs What? 2013 Audit of Student Control of Student Services

During 2012 NUS undertook an audit of student control of student services. This has been repeated in 2013. Where possible the audit has been confirmed with campus presidents.

The service categories are adapted from those used in the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee's 2003 Survey of University Student Organisations (i.e., pre-VSU). Unfortunately that survey did not differentiate between university-run and student-run services.

However, the broad long-term trends in student control of student services are clear. The traditional post-war university student organisations ran comprehensive student support, clubs and sports, and student leisure and cultural activities. The student bodies at these universities owned the student union building facilities such as catering, bars, second hand bookshops and meeting rooms and often the building itself. They produced a student newspaper, university diaries and in some cases also ran the graduate gown hire services.

At many universities the universal student amenities fee included a component dedicated to capital works development, which was often in the form of an additional levy on first year students. In a very real sense the, student body at the older universities had paid for their own buildings and facilities over many decades.

In the 1990s following the Dawkins-era campus mergers a few universities (such as Griffith University and the University of Wollongong) began to establish university service companies to take control of commercial operations from the student body. The state voluntary student unionism legislation in Western Australia during 1994-2001 also led to the transfer of some major student facilities to university control, for example sports at the University of Western Australia.

Since the federal Higher Education (Abolition of Compulsory up-front Student Union Fees) Act 2005 came into force in 2006 this process has rapidly accelerated. There has been a massive transformation, not only in the structure of student organisations but also in who controls the student estate. Hundreds of millions of dollars worth of student-run assets such as buildings, catering and conference facilities, sporting facilities and commercial leases have been transferred to university ownership. These assets are now typically held by university-owned service providers

staffed by university employees (see Appendix Two for a breakdown of these post-2006 asset transfers).

Very few universities, notably the Australian National University and the University of Sydney, have retained the traditional range of student-controlled student services.

The most common new model for student-run services emerging from the SSAF-era funding agreements is based around the provision of a limited range of student support, student-driven culture and activities, and student media. The most common fully student-run services listed in our audit are:

- Student Newspapers (28)
- Academic Rights and Advocacy (26)
- Non-Sporting Clubs (26)
- Concerts (13)
- University Dairies (11)
- Sporting Clubs (11)

The most common student services run jointly with the universities are:

- Orientation Activities (24)
- International Student Support (13)
- Welfare (12)
- Bookshops (12) (typically the student organisation runs a second-hand bookshop textbook service that complements the university-run new textbook store).



TABLE 2.1: WHO RUNS WHICH SERVICE?

Code: (S) Student Controlled Organisation, (U) University directly or university owned service company, (P) Private provider with a formal association with university (i.e. not just nearby)

SERVICE TYPE	UNIVERSITY	CATEGORY: STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES				
		Academic Rights and Advocacy	Welfare	Accommodation	International Student Support and Activities	Student Employment
University of Adelaide	S	S	U	S/U	S	
Australian National University	S/U	S/U	U/P	S/U	U	
University of Ballarat	U	U	U	U		
Central Qld	S	U	U	U	S	
Charles Darwin	U	U	U			
Charles Sturt University	U	U	U	U		
Curtin University	S	S/U	U	S/U	S/U	
Deakin University	S	U	U	U		
Edith Cowan University	S/U	S/U	P	U		
Flinders University	S	S	U	S/U	S	
Griffith – Brisbane	S	U	U/P	U	U	
James Cook University	S	S	U	S/U	U	
La Trobe University	S	S	U	S/U	U	
Macquarie University	U	U	U	U		
Monash Clayton	S	S/U	U	S/U	U	
Monash Gippsland	S	S/U		S/U		
Monash Parkville	S	S/U	U	S/U	U	
Murdoch University	S	S	U/P	S/U		
Newcastle – Callaghan	S	U	P	S/U	U	
Newcastle Ourimbah		U				
Queensland University of Technology	S	S/U	U/P	S/U		
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology	S	S/U	U	S/U	U	
SCU- Lismore		U	U	U	U	
SCU-Coffs	U	U	U/P	U	U	
Swinburne	U	S/U	U/P	S/U		
University of Canberra	S	U	S/U/P	S/U	U	
University of Melbourne	S	U	U	S/U	U	
University of New England	U	U	U	U	U	
University of NSW	S	S/U	U	S/U		
University of Queensland	S	S	U		S/U	
University of SA	S	U	U	U	U	
University of Southern Queensland	S	S	U/P	U		
University of Sunshine Coast	S	S	S/U/P	U		
University of Sydney	S	S/U	S/U/P	S/U	S/U	
University of Tasmania	S	S/U	U	S/U	U	
University of WA	S	S	U		S/U	
University of Western Sydney	U	U		U		
University of Wollongong	S/U	U	U	U		
UTS	S	U	U	U	U	
Victoria Uni	U	U	U	S/U	S/U	
Total (S)	26	9	0	0	3	
(S/U)	3	12	0	13	5	
(S/U/P)	0	0	3	0	0	
(S/P)	0	0	0	0	0	

Code: (S) Student Controlled Organisation, (U) University directly or university owned service company, (P) Private provider with a formal association with university (i.e. not just nearby)

SERVICE TYPE	UNIVERSITY	CATEGORY: NON-SPORTING ACTIVITIES						
		Non-sporting Clubs	Student Theatre	Student lounges	Concerts	Campus Cinema	Meeting Rooms	Orientation Activities
	University of Adelaide	S	S/U	U	S	U	U	S/U
	Australian National University	S	U	S/U	S	Govt	S/U	S/U
	University of Ballarat			U				U
	Central Qld	S		U				S/U
	Charles Darwin	S/U	U	S/U	U/P		U	U
	Charles Sturt University	S		U	U		U	U
	Curtin University	S	U	S/U	S	U	U	S/U
	Deakin University	S						S/U
	Edith Cowan University	S	U	S/U	S/U	U	S/U	S/U
	Flinders University	S		U	U		U	U
	Griffith – Brisbane	U	U	U	S/U	U	U	S/U
	James Cook University	S	U	S	S			S/U
	La Trobe University	S	S	S	S		S/U	S/U
	Macquarie University	U		U	U			U
	Monash Clayton	S	S	U	S/U	U	U	S/U
	Monash Gippsland	S		S			S	S
	Monash Parkville	S		S	S		S	S/U
	Murdoch University	S			S		U	S/U
	Newcastle – Callaghan	S/P	U	S/U	P	P	S/U	S/U
	Newcastle Ourimbah	S						
	Queensland University of Technology	S		S	S		S	
	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology	S/U	U	S/U	U	U	S/U	S/U
	SCU- Lismore	U		U	U	U		U
	SCU-Coffs	S/U		S/U	S			S/U
	Swinburne	S/U		U			U	S/U
	University of Canberra	U		U	U		U	U
	University of Melbourne	S	S	U	S/U		U	S/U
	University of New England	U		U	U	U	U	U
	University of NSW	S	S	S	S	S	S/U	S
	University of Queensland	S	S/U	U	S		U	S/U
	University of SA	S		U	U		U	U
	University of Southern Queensland	S			S			S/U
	University of Sunshine Coast	S		U				S/U
	University of Sydney	S	S	S/U	S		S/U	S/U
	University of Tasmania	S	U	U	S		U	
	University of WA	S			S	U		S/U
	University of Western Sydney	U		U	U			U
	University of Wollongong	U		U	U	U	U	U
	UTS	S	S	U	S			S/U
	Victoria Uni			U	S/U			S/U
	Total (S)	26	6	5	13	1	3	1
	(S/U)	4	2	8	5	0	7	24
	(S/U/P)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	(S/P)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

Code: (S) Student Controlled Organisation, (U) University directly or university owned service company, (P) Private provider with a formal association with university (i.e. not just nearby)

SERVICE TYPE	UNIVERSITY	CATEGORY: SPORT AND RECREATION				
		Sporting facilities	Shower, Change Room, Lockers	Leisure Activities	Sporting Clubs	Gyms
	University of Adelaide	S/U	S	S	S	S/U
	Australian National University	S	S	S/U	S	S
	University of Ballarat	U	U		U	U
	Central Qld	S/U	U	U	U	U
	Charles Darwin	U	U	U	U	U
	Charles Sturt University	U	U		U	U
	Curtin University	U	U	S/U	U	U
	Deakin University	U	U	U	S	
	Edith Cowan University	U	U	U	U	U
	Flinders University	U	U	U	U	U
	Griffith – Brisbane	U	U	S/U	U	U
	James Cook University	S	S	S	S	S
	La Trobe University	U	S/U	S/U	U	U
	Macquarie University	U	U	U	U	U
	Monash Clayton	U	U	S/U	U	U
	Monash Gippsland	S/U	U	U		U
	Monash Parkville	U		S		
	Murdoch University	S/U	S/U	S/U	S	S/U
	Newcastle – Callaghan	U	U	S/U	U/P	U
	Newcastle Ourimbah	S/U	U	S	S	U
	Queensland University of Technology	U	U	U	U	U
	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology	U	S/U	U	U	U/P
	SCU- Lismore	U	U	U	U	U
	SCU-Coffs	U	U	U	U	S/U
	Swinburne	U/P	U	U	U	U
	University of Canberra	U	U	U	U	U
	University of Melbourne	U	U	S/U	U	U
	University of New England	U	U	U	U	U
	University of NSW	S	S	S	S	U
	University of Queensland	U	U	U	U	U
	University of SA	U	U	U	U	U
	University of Southern Queensland	S/U	U	S	S	U
	University of Sunshine Coast	U	U	U	U	U
	University of Sydney	S/U	U	S	S	U
	University of Tasmania	U	U	U	S	U
	University of WA	U	U	U	U	U
	University of Western Sydney	U	U	U	U	U
	University of Wollongong	U	U	U	U	U
	UTS	S	S	S	S	S
	Victoria Uni	U	U	U	U	U
	Total (S)	3	4	7	11	3
	(S/U)	7	3	8	0	3
	(S/U/P)	0	0	0	0	0
	(S/P)	0	0	0	0	0

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SERVICE TYPE	UNIVERSITY	CATEGORY: COMMERCIAL				
		Catering/ Food	Bookshops	Other Shops	Conference Facilities	Academic Dress Hire
	University of Adelaide	U	S	U/P	U	U
	Australian National University	S	S/U	S/U	S/U	S
	University of Ballarat	U	U	U	U	U
	Central Qld	U	S/U		U	U
	Charles Darwin	P	U	U/P	U	U
	Charles Sturt University	U	U	U	U	S
	Curtin University	S/P	S/U	S	U	U
	Deakin University	S/U	S	S/U	S/U	U
	Edith Cowan University	U/P	S/U	U/P	U	U
	Flinders University	U	U	U	U	U
	Griffith – Brisbane	U	U	U/P	U	U
	James Cook University	S	U			U
	La Trobe University	U	S/U	U	U	U
	Macquarie University	U/P	U		U	
	Monash Clayton	S/U	U	S/U	U	U
	Monash Gippsland	S/U	S/U		U	U
	Monash Parkville					U
	Murdoch University	S	U	S/U		U
	Newcastle – Callaghan	U	U	P	U	U
	Newcastle Ourimbah	S	U	S/P	S	U
	Queensland University of Technology	S/P	U			S
	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology	U	U		U	U
	SCU- Lismore	U	U		U	
	SCU-Coffs	U/P	P	S/U	U	S/U
	Swinburne	U/P	U	P	U	U
	University of Canberra	U	U		U	U
	University of Melbourne	U/P	U	U	U	U
	University of New England	U	U	U	U	U
	University of NSW	U	U	U	S	S
	University of Queensland	S	S/U		S	U
	University of SA	U/P	S/U	P	U	U
	University of Southern Queensland	P	U		S/U	U
	University of Sunshine Coast	U	S/U	P	U	U
	University of Sydney	S/U	S/U	S/P	S/U	S
	University of Tasmania	U	U		U	U
	University of WA	S/U	S/U	S/P	S/U	P
	University of Western Sydney	U/P	U	U/P	U	U
	University of Wollongong	U	U	U/P	U	U
	UTS	S	S/U	S	S/U	U
	Victoria Uni	U	U	U	U	U
	Total (S)	6	2	1	3	3
	(S/U)	5	12	5	6	1
	(S/U/P)	0	0	0	0	0
	(S/P)	2	0	3	0	0

Code: (S) Student Controlled Organisation, (U) University directly or university owned service company, (P) Private provider with a formal association with university (i.e. not just nearby)

SERVICE TYPE	UNIVERSITY	CATEGORY: MEDIA		
		Student Newspaper	Campus radio or TV	University Diary
	University of Adelaide	S	S/U	S
	Australian National University	S	S	S
	University of Ballarat			U
	Central Qld	S		S
	Charles Darwin	S		U
	Charles Sturt University	S		
	Curtin University	S	U	S
	Deakin University	S		S
	Edith Cowan University	S/U	P	S/U
	Flinders University	S		U
	Griffith – Brisbane			U
	James Cook University	U		
	La Trobe University	S		S
	Macquarie University			U
	Monash Clayton	S	S	U
	Monash Gippsland			U
	Monash Parkville	S		U
	Murdoch University	S	U	S
	Newcastle – Callaghan	S/U	U	U
	Newcastle Ourimbah	S		U
	Queensland University of Technology	S		
	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology	S	S/U	U
	SCU- Lismore			U
	SCU-Coffs			U
	Swinburne	S		U
	University of Canberra	S		
	University of Melbourne	S		
	University of New England	S		U
	University of NSW	S	S/U	
	University of Queensland	S		
	University of SA	S	U	S
	University of Southern Queensland			
	University of Sunshine Coast			
	University of Sydney	S	S	S
	University of Tasmania	S		U
	University of WA	S		S
	University of Western Sydney			
	University of Wollongong	S		U
	UTS	S	P	S
	Victoria Uni	S		U
	Total (S)	28	3	11
	(S/U)	2	3	1
	(S/U/P)	0	0	0
	(S/P)	0	0	0



Section Three: SSAF Processes: Consultations and Negotiations

The following three parts of this report are based on responses from 31 campus student organisation presidents to the SSAF survey developed by NUS. Where relevant, comparisons are made with a similar survey conducted in 2012.

This section addresses the processes associated with the SSAF legislation and guidelines: consultation between universities and the campus student organisations, consultation with students elected to participate in SSAF consultations, consultation with the wider student body, and negotiations over the use of SSAF revenue. In short,

this section addresses the opportunities (or not) for students to know how their SSAF fees are being spent and to have meaningful input over how their fees should be allocated.

The legislation that governs these processes form part of the ministerial guidelines created under the Higher Education Legislation Amendment (Student Services and Amenities) Act 2010. These are known as the National Student Representation Protocols (listed below are the relevant clauses in operation at the time the survey was conducted).

THE LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT: 3.2.3 & 3.2.5 OF THE NATIONAL STUDENT REPRESENTATION PROTOCOLS

According to 3.2.3 the National Student Representation Protocols:

3.2.3 A HEP must provide enrolled students with the opportunity to participate in a process to democratically elect student representatives.

(a) Student representatives must be students enrolled at the relevant HEP. Representatives must be elected by students, with at least one representative elected from each of the following categories:

- students enrolled in an undergraduate course of study;
- students enrolled in a postgraduate course of study; and
- overseas students.

(b) In meeting this obligation a HEP is to meet the necessary and reasonable costs of conducting valid and transparent polls for this purpose. Reasonable support might, for example, include funding for polling booths and ballot papers.

According to 3.2.5 the National Student Representation Protocols:

3.2.5 HEPs (Higher Education Providers) must have a formal process of consultation with democratically elected student representatives and representatives from major student organisations at the HEP regarding the specific uses of proceeds from any compulsory student services and amenities fee charged under section 19-38 of the Act.

Consultation must include:

- (a) Publishing identified priorities for proposed fee expenditure and allowing opportunities to comment on those priorities by students and student associations and organisations; and
- (b) Meeting with democratically elected student representatives and representatives from major student organisations at the HEP to consider the priorities for use of fee revenue.

3.1 Consultation with the Student Organisations and democratically elected student representatives

How were democratically elected student representatives consulted (select all that apply and provide details)?

- a. A committee was formed by the university, with student representative members - **20**
- b. Student representatives had one on one meeting/s with university administration - **11**
- c. Student representatives were asked to present proposals - **13**
- d. Student representatives initiated process of consultation - **3**
- e. Student representatives within university structure only were consulted - **1**
- f. Student organisation was not consulted - **3**
- g. Other (describe)

Were elected international student representatives consulted?

Yes - **17**
No - **12**

How would you rate the consultation with democratically elected student representatives?

- a. Outstanding – genuine consultation that took into account the views of student representatives and developed proposals accordingly – **3**
- b. Good – university made an effort to engage with student representatives, but it could have been better/could be improved – **16**
- c. Tokenistic – students were asked their opinions but they were not taken into account by the university when distributing SSAF revenue – **7**
- d. Condemned – consultation with student representatives was non-existent or hostile – **4**

Would you recommend the process of consultation your university undertook in 2013 with student representatives be included as an example of best practice (yes/no?)

Yes - **6**
No - **21**
N/A - **1**

COMMENTS AND MAJOR ISSUES

The majority of respondents reported that elected student organisation representatives were consulted about the 2013 SSAF distribution both through a designated university committee and one-on-one meetings with the university administration. This is similar to the 2012 survey results aside from an increase from one to three in the number of student organisations reporting that there was no meaningful consultation process (Griffith, Adelaide, Newcastle), which is cause for some concern.

This does not include situations such as at the University of Melbourne where a three-year agreement was in place. Adelaide University Union has a ten-year guarantee on overall base funding levels but NUS argues these students should have had regular consultation over how the SSAF was allocated (both by the university and within Adelaide University Union).

There was a small drop in the percentage of respondents who rated the university consultation with elected student representatives as ‘Outstanding’ or ‘Good’ (68% in 2012, 63% in 2013). There was also drop in ratings about whether the consultations represented ‘best practice’ (from 38% in 2012, to 22% in 2013). These results run against the expectation that teething problems identified with the initial, rushed consultations in 2012 may have been addressed and led to improved consultations.

THE MAJOR ISSUES RAISED BY RESPONDENTS INCLUDED:

Lack of transparency

“(Consultation would be improved) With a policy of complete transparency on behalf of the university regarding the total amount, planning, distribution and the use of SSAF funds prior to their allocation, coupled with openness to funding allocation suggestions from students.” (Griffith University Arts SRC)

“SCU needs to be transparent with the SRC and the SRAs regarding SSAF expenditure. To date, the university is refusing to release the returns of 2012 SSAF expenditure but

yet expect the SRC to sign off on it. The university also needs to inform the SRC on how much SSAF is being collected and student priorities before they vote on expenditure and service delivery.” (Lismore and External Undergraduate Student Association (LEXUS), Southern Cross University)

Composition of committees

One of the points of contention was the composition of the consultative committees. Even though the committees are only advisory structures some universities tried to have university staff majorities. In some cases, following opposition from student organisations the committee membership was amended to have equal numbers of university staff and student representatives:

“The committee is comprised of five staff and five students. Originally it was going to be eight staff and five students until UNEG objected.” (University of New England Guild)

“There was an initiative from the university to create a SSAF committee in 2012, comprising of three university staff members and two student representatives. Though, the Student Union had to pressure the university for a third student representative on the committee for equal voting right on SSAF allocation. After extensive negotiation the university allowed a third student representative on the committee.” (Victoria University Student Union)

Representatives from international student associations were members of the SSAF committees on only a small number of universities (University of New England, University of Melbourne, Edith Cowan).

Consultation with representatives from international student associations or departments more commonly occurred indirectly. This was similar to 2012.

Pre-determined outcomes of consultation

“The university admins involved were not the appropriate people to be doing the consultation process, there is a clear conflict of interest with people leading the consultation who want the majority of SSAF to go to their organisation. (Swinburne Student Union)

Time and resources to develop alternative proposals

“We were given very little time to work on our proposal, as we were told quite late about our meeting; We also were not told what they wanted from us e.g. a proposal, nor were we told how the documentation provided to them would be used” (Swinburne Student Union)

“The negotiation needed to happen earlier than it had.” (Edith Cowan Student Guild)

“There needed to be resources applied to the SROs (Student Representative Organisations) as UNE SRO is starting from such a low resource base. If the UNE SRO was not tenacious this SRO would have been consulted tokenistically. We are still struggling with the problem of low resources (University of New England Guild)

“A greater time period set aside so that we can be better prepared. Our proportion of funding was reduced significantly from 70% to 46% with very little notice.” (University of WA Student Guild)

Need For formalised time frames for consultations/ negotiations

“From discussions with university administration we agree that the process should begin from a set date at the end of October, and that a formal consultation process should be in place which sets out a specific timeline for the submission of a funding proposal, dates of negotiating meetings and a deadline for receiving notification of Students’ Association funding” (UTS Students Association)

Who are the democratically elected student representatives?

“Firstly, the university needs to recognize the SRAs (Student Representative Associations) and legitimate democratically elected student representatives and include us in the consultation process. The SRAs are the only body of democratically elected students that have a physical presence on campus and liaise with students on a regular basis. To exclude such groups from SSAF consultation appears to be against the legislation and disaffecting the student voice.” (LEXUS)

The recent ministerial panel reviewing the SSAF guidelines identified ambiguities about the role of students elected to SSAF consultation committees as a major issue:

“The need for greater clarification regarding: elected student representation as required under the Guidelines; the relationship between these representatives and independent student associations/major student organisations (Clause 3.2.3); and the role of these students in respect of consultation.”

3.2 Consultation with the Student Body

How was the student body consulted (if at all)?

- a. Survey online - **21**
- b. Forum(s) - **4**
- c. Focus groups - **8**
- d. Student organisation only - **7**
- e. Other – **10**

Was consultation with students organised through the student organisation or through the university?

- a. Completely through the university with no consultation of student reps - **11**
- b. Mostly through the university but student representatives were consulted as to the methodology – **7.5**
- c. Partnership between the university and student representatives – **3.5**
- d. Mostly through student representatives but with some university input - **5**
- e. Completely through the student organisation - **1**
- f. N/A - **2**

Note: 0.5 response is distributed where respondent has indicated two responses

How would you rate your university's consultation with students?

- a. Great - **1**
- b. Good - **10**
- c. Pass - **5**
- d. Bad – **10**
- e. Non-existent – **3**

Were different cohorts of students targeted for their views? (select all that apply)

- a. International students - **8**
- b. Postgraduate students - **8**
- c. Mature age students - **1**
- d. Part time students - **2**
- e. ATSI students - **1**
- f. Different cohorts were not consulted
- g. N/A, all student were targeted as a whole - **19**
- h. There was no student consultation - **3**
- i. Undergrad - **1**
- j. External - **1**

Were the opinions of students taken into account by the university in allocating the SSAF?

- a. Yes, consultation was genuine, they took on board feedback, and altered proposals based on feedback - **6**
- b. To an extent - **11**
- c. Only very minor things taken on board - **4**
- d. Not at all, it was an obfuscatory exercise - **6**
- e. N/A - **2**

Were students at your university, or student representatives offered the opportunity to publish the SSAF priorities for 2012, or 2013 (if information is available)?

- Yes - **11**
- No – **15**

Would you recommend the process of consultation your university undertook with the student body be included as an example of best practice (yes/no)?

- Yes - **3**
- No – **23**

COMMENTS AND MAJOR ISSUES

The 2013 results show that there was a wide recognition by universities that they needed to participate in some form of consultation with the student body (beyond elected student representatives) over the use of the SSAF fee. In 2012 there were four universities where the entire consultation with the student body was conducted by the student organisations with no involvement from the university.

The forms of consultation with the wider student body were similar to 2012 with on-line surveys as the most common mechanism, followed by focus groups. Notable amongst other forms of consultation was Southern Cross University that conducted a SSAF Roadshow:

“SCU hosted a SSAF Roadshow where they went around to each campus informing students of their intentions to conduct an online SSAF survey, followed by another roadshow to publish the results”. (LEXUS)

There was only a small positive change in the percentage of respondents who rated the university consultation with student body as ‘Great’ or ‘Good’ (39% in 2012, 30% in 2013). There was a drop in ratings about whether the consultations represented “best practice” (from 17% in 2012, to 12 % in

2013). As with the student representative consultations these results run against the expectation that teething problems identified with the initial, rushed consultations in 2012 may have been addressed and led to improved consultations. Also, due to the NUS surveys, student representatives are better able to benchmark the consultation processes with processes on other campuses, and this may possibly have had an impact on the awarding of highest scores.

Only one respondent reported a student-led consultation process. At UNSW the university let the elected student representatives run the whole consultation process with the student body. The consultation included online survey, forums, focus groups and opportunities for students to make submissions. The consultation process was developed by the Student Leaders Group (which consisted of President of the Student Representative Council, President of the Postgraduate Council, Chair of Arc (the student organisation), Convener of the Arc Student Development Committee (clubs and volunteers), the Inter-Residence Council (students in on-campus accommodation), a student representative from UNSW Sport and Recreation, the postgraduate representative on University Council, and the undergraduate representative on University Council.

THE MAJOR ISSUES RAISED BY RESPONDENTS OVERALL INCLUDED:

Consultation with student body not done

“An all student survey and focus groups were done in 2011, but this wasn’t repeated in 2012. The University was in the process of appointing a new VC at the time, and the survey and focus groups just didn’t eventuate. They expressed sincere apologies to the SRC and AUU about this.” (Adelaide University Union)

“Students were not consulted about SSAF. Nor even informed of its imposition until they saw a bulk email notifying them of unexplained and non-itemised ‘fees outstanding’, with further implications for library borrowing rights, etc if left unpaid.” (Griffith University Arts SRC)

Poor timing of the consultation processes

“It was done online over the Christmas/ New Year break and only talked about via one email that few students saw.” (Flinders University Students Association)

“The university decided at the end of 2012 that student consultation was necessary and asked the Guild to run focus groups in the last week of Semester two. Obviously this was incredibly poor timing.” (Murdoch University Student Guild)

Tokenistic consultation

“Much like the rest of Monash’s consultation it was very tokenistic and seemed like Monash was only doing it to tick certain boxes rather than having a genuine consultation

and submission period for students.” (Monash University Students’ Association – Clayton)

Lack of recognition of student diversity In consultation

Only about a quarter of universities tailored part of their consultations specifically to particular sub-sections of the student body, most commonly postgraduates, international students and students at satellite campuses:

“Instead of looking at a general population sample, the University could target specific cohorts of students to find out specifically which services would benefit different groups on campus.” (Curtin University Student Guild).

“The university should make an effort to consult with particular groupings of students. The framework for judging student priorities for SSAF funding in 2013 is to appeal to the majority of students and may not account for the more specific needs of students from low-SES backgrounds, International students or students from disadvantaged backgrounds.” (UTS Students Association)

“There was insufficient consultation or understanding of the needs of non-Parkville students and as a result there was a petition doing the rounds at the Victorian College of the Arts (University of Melbourne, Southbank Campus). This spurred Student Services into a bit of an attempt at campus-specific consultation that is continuing to inform which problems are addressed at non-Parkville campuses. As a result of this and by acknowledging that the central University Student Services (based at Parkville) could not fully understand or provide adequate services for each of the smaller campuses, SSAF funding was put in the hands of those faculties (e.g. Veterinary Science at Werribee) to try and arrange a more ‘on the ground’ approach to SSAF distribution and service delivery. Since the SSAF, negotiations around SSAF-affected funding and services the University has increased the involvement of UMSU in aspects of the University’s student engagement agenda which has been a huge positive.” (University of Melbourne Student Union)

“The prioritisation of SSAF allocation process could have been more substantial, as well as the consultation of different cohorts of students.” (Victoria University Student Union)

Lack of context and transparency due to minimal information provided to students about campus SSAF arrangements

“Most students actually have no idea that a significant portion of their SSAF goes to Sports and University run student services” (University of WA Student Guild)

“(Need for) a policy of complete transparency on behalf of the university regarding the total amount, planning, distribution and the use of SSAF funds prior to their

allocation, coupled with openness to funding allocation suggestions from students “(Griffith University – Arts SRC)

“Priorities were published by the University, but there was no dollar figure attached to it, students could not possibly know where the money had been allocated to, or how much or if it was a student run organisation or not.” (Swinburne University Union)

“Wider publication of actual proposals for expenditure is recommended. In 2012, only two students of the University (Student Union President and one University Council member) were shown actual proposals for expenditure of the SSAF revenue.” (RMIT Student Union)

Need for others forms of consultation apart from an on-line survey

“The University could have organised forums and focus groups with the student organisations for students to communicate what they want from their Student Union or University services more broadly. An online survey is not really sufficient and whilst we ran our own Union survey into the SSAF, the University needed to manage the transition into the Fee including students’ understanding of what it was, where the money was or should go and reasonable expectations. This may have gone some way to minimising discontent.” (University of Melbourne Student Union)

The recent ministerial panel reviewing the SSAF guidelines identified problems with some university consultations as a major issue:

“The issue of the timing of consultation with the student body on priorities for expenditure of fee revenue and the publication these priorities (Clause 3.2.5), as well as timing of the distribution of funds.”

As well as developing amendments to the guidelines to address timing of the consultation the panel also recommended that the transparency around SSAF expenditure be strengthened:

“HEPs be required to annually publicly report on how SSAF funds are expended and to identify SSAF funded projects.”

3.3 Negotiations

There is no explicit requirement in the SSAF guidelines that universities must actually ‘negotiate’ with student representatives or the student body, as the word ‘consultation’ is used in the Guidelines. In the submission put to the Review Panel, NUS recommended that formal negotiations regarding SSAF must take place, as this would guarantee good faith and an equal standing between universities and students.

How would you rate the negotiation process at your university (if your negotiations have not been finalised pick the most appropriate)?

- Excellent: collaborative, constructive, university took into account point of view of students and student representatives and was pro-active about engagement and negotiations - **6**
- Good: positive, reasonably consultative though students’ views could have stronger input and consideration - **7**
- Satisfactory: room for improvement but overall sufficient negotiations took place – **7**
- Bad: did not listen to student perspectives and went ahead with its own plans, negotiations if they occurred at all were unproductive or ignored – **7**
- Non-existent - **1**

How has the negotiation process affected your organisation’s ability to fulfil its role this year?

- Signed an agreement in 2012 so not at all - **10**
- Signed an agreement early in 2013 so there was minimal impact on functions - **4**
- Agreement was not signed until recently (or is yet to be signed) but organisation is being funded under 2012 or previous arrangements so no significant impact - **9**
- Agreement only recently signed and funding uncertainty seriously impeded the ability of the organisation to function
- Agreement yet to be signed and funding uncertainty is currently seriously affecting the ability of the organisation to function or consider long-term arrangements - **7**

Has the signing of any funding agreement been significantly hampered by bureaucratic processes, delays or changes in university situation i.e. conditions beyond the control of the student organisation or the students they represent (yes/no)?

Yes: **12**

No: **13**

Has the negotiation process differed greatly from the process adopted in 2012, to your knowledge?

Yes: **- 6**

No: **-10**

N/A **- 5**

Would you recommend the negotiation process at your university as an example of best practice (yes/no)?

Yes **- 7**

No **- 21**

COMMENTS AND MAJOR ISSUES

As in 2012 there were a few cases where the ‘consultation’ amounted to the university telling the student representatives how they had already decided to spend the SSAF. More commonly there was a token opportunity for student representatives to make comments on the university SSAF plan (as required in the guidelines). 26% of the respondents rated their negotiations with their university as “non-existent” or “bad”.

Positive working relationships maintained

“It is a strong working process, though the university is willing to listen and open for negotiation.” (Victoria University Student Union)

“Quite thorough, we got what we wanted, and the relationship between us and the University remained strong and healthy.” (Adelaide University Union)

Exclusion of relevant student representative organisations

As with the consultation processes there were cases where universities refused to include existing student organisations in negotiations and dealt solely with the SSAF advisory committees consisting of university staff and students directly elected to that committee via university run elections (typically with much lower voter turnouts than student organisation elections).

“The University run on their own agenda, the timeline isn’t abided by nor considerate of other organisations, it appears to be a deliberately difficult process. It cannot be considered a negotiation process if there is no discussion between two parties, there has only been consultation.” (Swinburne Student Union)

“There wasn’t a negotiation process as such, but it would have been more productive if the independent student organisations and other service providers had been invited to contribute their current knowledge of student needs rather than being excluded from the processes that were imposed on them by the SSAF steering committee” (Southern Cross University Coffs Harbour Students Association)

Harmful impact of university delays on funding

48% of respondents reported that bureaucratic processes, delays or changes in their university’s general situation had significantly hampered their student organisation’s funding agreement. 24% of respondents reported that funding uncertainty is currently seriously affecting the ability of the organisation to function or to consider long-term arrangements such as stable employment conditions for student organisation employees.

“The university has significantly delayed SSAF negotiations. The 2013 SSAF funding proposal was submitted in December 2012 and despite repeated requests the university has delayed discussing the proposal until late February.” (UTS Students’ Association)

“Delays in negotiation process... Convoluted process for project approval (initially – this was later changed to have less micro-managing. This had overheads, as project proposals put forward by Curtin took slightly different paths compared to how they were described on the committee)” (Curtin University Student Guild)

“The longer that the negotiation took with delays, meant the longer we went without money which impacted our financial position and ability to plan long term strategies.” (Monash Students Association – Clayton)

“Every step of the way has been extrapolated by bureaucratic processes, and so little money was able to be spent in 2012 before the University took the SSAF money back (the university is not allowing SSAF funds to roll over year to year). FUSA are working hard to ensure these processes are streamlined but finding it difficult to get around red tape.” (Flinders University Students’ Association)

3.4 Recommendations To Improve Campus SSAF Processes

ROLE OF STUDENT ORGANISATION REPRESENTATIVES IN THE CONSULTATION

One of the most contentious outcomes of the student representative guidelines are the ambiguities in the National Student Representation guidelines over the status of students elected to SSAF-expenditure advisory committees and existing student representative organisations. Clause 3.2.5 is worded in such a way that “democratically elected student representatives” could arguably be regarded as separate from “representatives from major student organisations.”

The separate election process has created confusion over the role of existing student organisations in SSAF consultation and negotiation processes. Some universities have dealt directly with their major student organisation(s) as the primary form of consultation with students. Others have set up student advisory committees with students elected directly to the committee and without nominees from the student organisations. In a few cases universities have sought to exclude student organisations from the SSAF consultations altogether.

The 2013 ministerial working party to review the National Student Representation Protocols during 2013 re-drafted the guidelines to clarify the role of student representatives in the consultation process. The practical effect of the changes was to give universities the explicit option of appointing student organisation representatives to SSAF consultation committees and thus removing any implied requirement to run separate elections for the SSAF consultation process.

NUS takes a stronger position on this than the ministerial working party.

Recommendation One: NUS recommends that representatives from the major campus student organisations (where they exist) must be included in the SSAF consultation and negotiation processes.

COMPOSITION OF SSAF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Recommendation Two: NUS recommends that the SSAF committee have a majority of student representatives, or that university representation and student representation be at least equal. University representatives should not outnumber student representatives.

TRANSPARENCY AND CONSULTATION WITH THE STUDENT BODY

Recommendation Three: NUS recommends that all universities must produce a document clearly explaining what the SSAF is, updated fee amounts and how it is being spent with references to all SSAF-funded student organisations/university run services on campus and what they provide as a result of the SSAF, to be put on university websites and sent out to students via an all-student email.

NUS made this recommendation to the ministerial working party. The final report did recommend greater specificity from the universities on what must be reported to the student body:

“Consultation must be timely, form part of the HEP’s annual financial planning, and must include notifying the enrolled students and democratically elected student representatives referred to above of:

- i. the purpose of the SSAF;
- ii. the amount of revenue anticipated;
- iii. the mechanisms to establish priorities for expenditure; and
- iv. the timing and mechanism available to comment on the proposed priorities. “

Recommendation Four: NUS further recommends:

(a) That communication from universities to students about SSAF and its expenditure is checked by student representatives to ensure that it is comprehensible to students.

(b) That universities and student organisations annually collaborate to refine the plans for consultation with the student body. Consultation can include but is not limited to surveys, forums, and focus groups with web pages, social media, student media and all-student e-mails to promote the process.

TIMELINES

NUS recommended to the ministerial working party that reasonable time limits or timelines for the SSAF consultation process, submissions, broader student consultation and the signing of a final agreement should be agreed upon at the outset by the university and student representatives i.e. funding certainty can be secured no later than the end of February in the following year, with consultations to begin before the end of October the previous year.

The guidelines in operation for the 2013 consultation failed to provide an express requirement for an annual consultation with the student body over SSAF expenditure. The ministerial working party recommended that such an annual requirement be made explicit in the guidelines. As universities have different annual budget cycles the report from the ministerial working party did not go down the path of specifying calendar months as deadlines for the consultation process. Instead the ministerial working party proposed that the guidelines be adjusted to include:

“Once consultation has been undertaken, and the HEP has determined through consultation how the revenue will be spent, information on the established priorities, proposed heads of expenditure and projects to be funded must be made publicly available to the student body.”

“At the completion of the annual budget cycle HEPs must provide a publicly available report on actual SSAF expenditure for the year.”

This does not address all of NUS’ concerns on the lack of specificity in the time-lines.

Recommendation Five: NUS recommends that consultation with the student body occur before the end of October and that that funding outcomes from the consultation/ negotiations be concluded by February.

GOOD FAITH CONSULTATION AND NEGOTIATIONS

NUS believes that the best outcome for students in striking an appropriate balance between SSAF allocations to student controlled organisations and university-run organisations will arise from informed, good faith consultations and negotiations.

Recommendation Six: NUS recommends that all consultations, discussions and negotiations held regarding the division and expenditure of the Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) in which student representatives, student organisation representatives and/or the university participate in, that all parties must act in good faith, and in the best interests of the students.



Section Four: SSAF Outcomes

4.1 Funding Agreements

What kind of agreement have you signed with your university?

Interim - 5

Multi-year -6

Base funding agreement with additional SSAF funding agreed - 5

Yet to sign an agreement for 2013 – 15

(Note: this was the situation at the time of the survey)

How has your funding situation changed under the SSAF compared to VSU – in 2012 and in 2013?

a. Dramatically improved - 9

b. Improved - 12

c. Funding level is the same as under VSU - 2

d. Funding has decreased - 4

e. University is not funding the student organisation – 1

In your opinion, do you believe the university has used SSAF expenditure in ways that explicitly contradict the wishes of students, or for reasons that would render it in breach of the SSAF intent and purpose (please answer as best as you can, prior and extensive knowledge of SSAF legislation and Guidelines is not assumed) (yes/no)?

Yes - 6

No – 17

COMMENTS AND MAJOR ISSUES

The significant shift in terms of terms of funding agreements compared to 2012 has been the long delays in having them signed off by the university (38% in 2012, 48% in 2013).

This may be partly explained by the fact that this survey was initially conducted earlier than in 2012. However, many campus presidents subsequently confirmed that funding arrangements for 2013 had not been finalised by late first semester. This is obviously a source of anxiety and stress not only for student representatives but also for staff employed by student organisations to deliver SSAF-funded student services and the students who use those services.

This would be alleviated by more universities entering into multi-year funding agreements with negotiations for the subsequent agreement finalised prior to the expiry of the current agreements.

75% of respondents reported that the funding situation for their organisation had 'dramatically improved' or 'improved' under SSAF compared to the VSU-era. As we shall discuss more fully below this was more typically an expansion of the existing services (such as employing additional caseworker staff) rather taking back high cost infrastructure or commercial services that had been transferred to the university.

Campuses where there has been no increase in student organisation funding since SSAF

NUS is concerned that despite the multi-million dollar SSAF fees collected at each university that a quarter of respondents reported that their funding has remained static or decreased. This number does not include Macquarie University and the University of Ballarat, both of which also currently do not have independent student-run organisations.

Traditional funding replaced by SSAF, i.e. no significant capacity for new service creation

No respondent raised matters about their university's use of the SSAF that would constitute a legal breach of SSAF legislation. However several respondents raised the issue that financial windfall to universities arising from the SSAF arrangements had not been used to create new services. Instead it was being used to replace the VSU-era direct university grants for existing services or to cross-subsidise loss-making university run commercial services:

"They withdrew all our historical funding and just replaced it with SSAF. Students are paying hundreds of dollars more every year for no extra services." (Sydney University SRC)

"The uni has used SSAF to cross-subsidise uni business enterprises, and to cover losses made by these enterprises, e.g. the uni gym" (Tasmanian University Union)

4.2 Transfer of Services

Is the university supportive of transferring services to student organisations?

- a. Yes, this is already in progress - 3
- b. Yes, we are working on a plan with the university - 4
- c. Maybe this has not been discussed yet - 6
- d. No the university wants to maintain the status quo – 10
- e. No the university is attempting to take over services currently run by student organisations – 6

Have you claimed any student services back from the university, or vice versa?

Yes: 11

No: 16

TABLE 4.2: ADDITIONAL DETAILS FROM RESPONDENTS ON STUDENT SERVICE TRANSFERS

ANU Students Association	We still undertake the same services as we did pre- SSAF. As a result of SSAF, we've been able to expand those services and hire more staff to assist in providing them.
CDU Students Association	CDUSA does not have any student services beyond student representation. Previously the student union operated many student services.
Curtin Student Guild	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The University took over the jobs board/careers service (within roughly the last two years) -University took over childcare (before SSAF) -University took over sport (before SSAF) - University will not lease any commercial space to the Guild
Flinders University Students Association	Independent Student Advocacy has come across to FUSA.
La Trobe Student Union	Student Theatre and Film, Student Legal Service and Events and Activities among others have been transferred from the university to the LTSU.
Lismore and External Undergraduate Student Association (LEXUS), Southern Cross	Currently LEXUS has been preoccupied with securing basic funding to continue to provide services already under its control. According to LEXUS, it seems the university is not in favour of returning any services to the SRAs. The university department (UniLife) created to take over student services post-VSU is continuing to grow and be supported by the university whilst the SRAs have been starved for funding since August 2012.
Monash Students Association (Clayton)	During the implementation of VSU, Monash claimed back many of the MSA's departments, such as Transport and Childcare. Under SSAF however there have been no services returned to student control.
Monash University Gippsland Student Union	Monash University reclaimed 'Monash Sport' from MUGSU before SSAF was introduced. Since this time MUGSU has been negotiating changes to increase its responsibilities, with the potential for joint ownership of the campus bookshop and potentially MUGSU ownership into the future. MUGSU has also expressed interested in running the canteen and student residences.
Murdoch University Student Guild	Sports & Rec is in the process of being transferred back to the university after the Guild had run the centre and social sports for many years. This is a direct result of funding cuts following VSU and the Guild not being in a position to significantly upgrade the centre or perform extensive maintenance. Even with SSAF, the university has a much greater capacity, financially to upgrade and maintain what is now an aging facility. We anticipate significant student input into governance of sports as a requirement of the handover agreement.
Newcastle University Students' Association	UoN Services Ltd. (A controlled entity of the University operating commercial outlets) has set up a second "student" magazine and started running competing free BBQ services on Tuesday. Additionally it has started running clubs affiliation and funding in a structure that according to NUSA is a near exact copy of their system. The University does not recognise the existing Grievance Service offered by NUSA and has not funded it for 2013. They have posted information on their website that there is no independent Grievance Service and that they will be using SSAF funding to establish one.
Tasmanian University Union	Uni purchased all the TUU retail services in 2012.

University of Melbourne Student Union	The legal service, Student Theatre, the Rowden White non-academic library, student arts gallery and the communications unit were all transferred from MUSUL (a wholly owned subsidiary of the University) to UMSU as of January 1, 2013. UMSU also won the tender for an all student Advocacy service in March 2012, which was tied to \$400,000 in funding. As of writing UMSU is also awaiting the results of a 2012 University report into volunteering, orientation, leadership and transition services which suggested the possibility of transferring responsibility for some of these programs to the Student Union.
University of New England Student Association	No transitions at this stage, although governance restructure (from the Guild to the Students Association) will mean a change in the independent advocate reporting and relationship.
University of NSW Arc	The University recently purchased Arc's leases for its on campus convenience stores with a long-term funding deal equal to the lost revenue they generated, however these stores were not strictly run as a service for the student organisation (goods were not sold at subsidised rates). The University has indicated a willingness to hand over more student-focussed and/or driven services to Arc (with funding to run them) in the future.
USC Student Guild	Student welfare and support along with Advocacy and Club funding has been shifted to the USC Student Guild.
Uni of SA Students Association (previously UniLife)	The control of the student bar and sporting clubs has transitioned from the control of the student organisation, USASA.
Victoria University Student Union	No, but there are current negotiations for the advocacy department to be reclaimed by the student organisation.
Wollongong University Students Association	The university has taken back advocacy, financial and legal services

The re-introduction of a compulsory fee has not led to a generalised return of the pre-VSU student estate to student organisations. In terms of who runs particular student services the common response is that either that the VSU-era status quo has been maintained or that it has not been discussed (55% in 2012 and 2013). Only 24% of respondents reported that either some services had been transferred back to student control or that plans were at least being developed with the university for such transfers.

Where the transfers have occurred they have not been for the major infrastructure owned by pre-VSU student organisations (buildings, retail operations, sporting facilities). Instead, they have been for important but lower cost services such as: academic rights, legal or welfare advocacy (Flinders, Sunshine Coast, La Trobe), student newspapers (Flinders, University of New England), clubs (Flinders, Sunshine Coast) and arts/cultural services (La Trobe, Melbourne Uni). This is consistent with the emerging pattern of post-VSU student organisations based on delivering core services and programs based around academic rights, welfare and legal support, non-sporting clubs, student media and student-driven culture and events. Most of the university takeover of student services and student estate occurred during the VSU period. However, almost 21% of respondents reported that their university is or is planning to take over further student-run services. The Murdoch Student Guild is no longer in a position to fully maintain or upgrade the Sports Centre and so is in the process of transferring it to the university. The

Tasmania University Union sold all of its retail operations to the university in 2012. Newcastle University in 2013 has defunded the student run and independent academic rights advocacy service (going against the national trend for this service to return to student control). NUS is aware that a non-respondent, the University of Southern Queensland Student Guild, has in 2013 sold off its most of its catering operations in return for being able to be continue to commercially operate the health, recreation and sports centre in Toowoomba.



4.3 Percentage of Funding Going To Student Run Organisations

Before VSU the most common pattern was that the majority of the student amenities fees went to student-controlled organisations. The university retained a smaller portion to cover the costs of collecting the fee, maintenance of sporting grounds and for a few support services run directly by the university. The few exceptions were those campuses where a university-controlled service company had become the main service provider.

The 2013 survey shows that only 4 respondents (13%) reported that student run organisations received most (i.e. more than 50%) of the SSAF collected.

What proportion of the SSAF is going towards student organisations?

- a. All - 0
- b. Most - 4
- c. Some - 24
- d. None - 2

TABLE 4.3: CAMPUS DETAILS ON SSAF COLLECTED AND ALLOCATIONS TO STUDENT ORGANISATIONS

	SSAF Revenue Collected by Uni	Money To Student Run Organisations (SSAF and Grant)	Ratio of Funding of SSAF Collected
Adelaide Uni	\$1.9 million in 2012	\$516,000	27%
ANU	\$3.75 Million	\$3.74 million	Over 95%
Charles Darwin	About \$2 million	\$22,000	1.1%
Flinders	\$3.5 million	\$1.3 million	37%
Griffith	\$3 million	\$1.25 million	42%
James Cook	\$3 million	\$1.4 million	47%
La Trobe	\$6.8 million	\$2.3 million	34%
Monash	\$12 million	\$5.2 million	43%
Murdoch	Unknown	Unknown	About 50%
Newcastle	\$6.6 million	Unknown	About 7%
RMIT	\$12 million	\$2.5 million	21%
Swinburne	\$3.7 million	\$200,000	5%
Uni of Melbourne	\$11.7 million	\$4.2 million	36%
Uni of New England	\$2.5 million	Zero apart from small projects	0%
Uni of NSW	\$7 million	\$3.2 million	46%
Uni of SA	\$3.9 million	\$1.5 million	38%
Uni of Sunshine Coast	\$2 million	\$400,000	20%
Uni of Sydney	\$12.2 million	\$9.9 Million	82%
Uni of WA	\$4.2 million	\$1.95 million	46%
Victoria University	\$4.6 million in 2012	\$220,000	5%

We received sufficient financial details from 20 respondents to be able to create Table 4.3 comparing the total financial grant (i.e. both from the SSAF revenue and university grant for non-SSAF activities such as student representation) with the SSAF revenue collected by the university. Note that for this reason the table should not be used as guide to the percentage of SSAF allocated to student organisations.

Notwithstanding this qualification the most common pattern is that student organisations received combined (SSAF and non SSAF) grants that are equivalent to 20 – 50% of the SSAF collected from students. At the other end of the

spectrum are the universities where is little or no funding as the student organisations are just starting up again (Charles Darwin, University of New England) or have been defunded (Ballarat, Macquarie).

Another complication is that the partial repeal of Western Australian state legislation since 2002 meant that the Guilds were to be guaranteed a minimum of 50% of the student amenities fee collected. Universities in WA have recently challenged this interpretation of the state legislation. Notably this year the total grant to the UWA Student Guild has been reduced to below 50%.

4.4 Campus President Nominated Priority Services

The student organisations at several universities collapsed under VSU and are now starting to build new structures. It is unreasonable to expect that these organisations immediately take on all functions that the more well established student organisations have. At the end of the SSAF survey campus presidents were asked to nominate what they believed to be the top five priority student services that should be provided by student organisations. This may help student representatives where structures are being re-established to decide which services they should prioritise.

Services nominated by campus presidents were as follows:

Academic Rights and Advocacy – 19

Welfare Services, Student Newspapers – 16

Non-Sporting Clubs – 13

Orientation Activities – 11

Legal Services - 8

International Student Services and Activities - 7

Student Lounges, Catering and Food Services – 6

Leisure Activities – 5

Bookshops – 3

Sporting Clubs, University Diary, Campus Radio or Television - 2

Student Employment Service, Student Accommodation, Campus Sports, On Campus Shops, Meeting Rooms, Sporting Facilities - 1

Student Theatre, Computer Facilities, Shower, Change Room and Locker Facilities, Concerts, Discount Ticketing, Gymnasiums, Campus Cinema, Facility Maintenance, Art Galleries, Conference Facilities, Academic Dress Hire - 0

HANDS OFF OUR EDUCATION!

NO ROLL BACK OF TARGETS

EDUCATION FOR ALL

SAVE OUR SSAF

EDUCATION IS THE FOUNDATION OF A FAIR, JUST AND EQUAL SOCIETY.

**WEEK OF ACTION:
28 OCT – 1 NOV
SHOW THE GOVERNMENT
THAT WE MEAN BUSINESS**

NATIONAL UNION OF
NUS
STUDENTS

Authorised by Clare Keyes-Liley, National Education Officer 2013, NUS

Section Five: Student Representation and Independence

Legislative context

Section 3.2.4 of the National Student Representative Protocols (as they were at the time of the survey) outlines the resource requirement to support student representation:

A HEP must provide adequate and reasonable support resources and infrastructure for elected student representatives to carry out their functions on behalf of enrolled students. Resources and infrastructure might, for example, include office space and IT equipment.

5.1 Background

Student representation activities need to be considered separately from the main SSAF legislation as they are not generally on the list of nineteen allowable expenditures. Instead these activities are often funded by separate service level funding agreements with universities drawing from non-SSAF revenues and are regulated by conformity to key performance indicators negotiated with the university. In the few cases where the student representative organisation still also runs commercial services there may be some cross-subsidy from their private trading profits.

These are essentially the same form of arrangements as operated at most campuses under voluntary student unionism legislation (2007 – 2011). Prior to this student representative organisations generally received a block grant from a portion of the revenue collected from the university student amenities fee (or equivalent). Apart from extreme circumstances the universities left students to set their own priorities through their own democratic processes. Student organisations were, however, required to submit regular audited financial reports to universities.

The SSAF legislation created ministerial guidelines (National Student Representation Protocols) to set some minimal requirements on all higher education providers to provide opportunities for elected student representation and some financial resource allocation to be able to participate in the SSAF consultation process. The SSAF Student Representation Guidelines create no obligation for universities to fund student representative organisations outside of the SSAF consultation process. Section 3.2.4 of the Protocols (as they were at the time of the survey) outlines the resource requirement:

A HEP must provide adequate and reasonable support resources and infrastructure for elected student representatives to carry out their functions on behalf of enrolled students. Resources and infrastructure might, for example, include office space and IT equipment.

The main problem with the protocols is that they are trying to encompass the full scope of higher education providers ranging from large (Table A) public universities to (Table C) HEP providers that might be a small private college operating from a rented office floor in a CBD building. The vagueness of the protocols means that some public universities are able to technically conform to the guidelines while not providing any significant resources for on-going student representation. Also arguably, the protocols only apply to elected student representatives to be able to participate in the SSAF consultation process. There is no requirement under SSAF that universities provide resources to student representative organisations.

For example the University of Ballarat has had no effective independent Students' Association since 2008, and the Association was formally dissolved in 2010. Since the passage of the SSAF legislation the university has created an advisory Student Senate Committee that meets 4 times a year to provide advice to a Deputy Vice Chancellor. While there is nothing wrong per se with a forum for student representatives to talk with university management this is not the same as having an on-going organisation serving a student driven agenda. NUS is concerned that the transition to the new Federation University in Victoria may extend the loss of effective, on-going student representation to the merger partner, the current Monash-Gippsland campus.

5.2 Involvement With University Decision Making

To what extent are democratically elected student representatives involved in university decision-making processes?

- Heavily involved: students sit on all or most university boards, committees and University Council or Senate, have an active input in decision making processes, and the university makes an effort to consult student representatives - **9**
- Quite involved: students sit on some university boards and committees, but their input is not always taken on board - **13**
- Somewhat involved: students sit on student consultative committees but they do not sit on any other boards or committees - **3**
- Not involved - **1**
- Excluded: the university handpicks students to consult with, these students are not part of an independent student organisation - **1**

How would you describe your relationship with the university administration?

- Regularly (i.e. once a month or more) meet with the VC and they listen to my opinions – **3.5**
- Regularly meet with DVCs/PVCs and they listen to my opinions and/ or consider some of my suggestions – **9.5**
- Have regular meetings with high-level university management (e.g. VC, DVCs/PVCs) but they do not take student concerns into account - **4**
- Have occasional meetings with VC, but most of my contact is with a relevant DVC and they take my opinions and suggestions reasonably seriously - **5**
- Have limited but positive relationships with university management - **6**
- Have no access to university administration

Are there any major changes to student representation that have occurred since 2012, i.e. Composition of University Council.

Yes: **8**
No: **9**

COMMENTS AND MAJOR ISSUES

Despite the ongoing funding pressures since VSU the majority of universities continue to maintain systems for student representation to central university decision-making bodies. In this survey 81% of respondents reported that democratically elected student representatives were either “heavily involved” or “quite involved” in their university decision-making processes (the 2012 survey result was similar at 79%).

A concern is that only 60% of respondents (student organisation presidents) reported that they had regular meetings with their Vice-Chancellor or senior university management (DVCs, Pro-VCs) (the 2012 survey result was 76%). However, as the 2013 survey responses were collected earlier than the 2012 this may reflect that the routines for communication had not yet been consolidated in the early months of the academic year.

STATE GOVERNMENT LEGISLATIVE CHANGES TO UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIPS

Victorian respondents reported there has been a major shift in student representation arrangements on University Councils over 2012-13. This was not due to SSAF-related matters. The state Liberal-National Coalition Government amended the university governance provisions in the state’s university acts to exclude student and staff representatives from holding elected voting positions on University Councils:

“La Trobe University, due to recent legislative changes in Victoria, is one of the Universities in the state to completely remove students from the University Council.” (La Trobe Student Union)

“Since the changes to Victorian Legislation, there have not been student representatives from the start of this year on University Council. Requests from the elected University Council member to be an observer were also denied.” (Monash Students Association – Clayton)

“Due to the legislation introduced in 2012 by the Victorian Government, students on University Council from 2013 are no longer voting members. They are ‘University Council Fellows’ and entitled to all the rights of a Council member except a vote. The presidents of the two student organisations were also removed as observers of University Council at the beginning of 2012 (before the legislation was introduced or spoken about publically).” (University of Melbourne Student Union)

5.3 Elected Office Bearer Honoraria

Are any student representatives at your university paid for their job?

Yes: 21

No: 6

Most of the responding student organisations have maintained a system where some student office bearers receive honoraria for performing substantial duties for their organisation (see Appendix Four for details). The six reported exceptions with a solely volunteer model are at Griffith University, University of New England, University of Sunshine Coast and the Southern Cross University.

89% of respondents supported the proposition that office bearer honoraria makes (or would make) it possible for student representatives to do their job more effectively. Similarly 90% of respondents supported the view that the honoraria makes (or would make it) possible for students from a greater diversity of backgrounds to get involved:

“I believe that full-time office bearing positions should be paid an honorarium of minimum wage. Student representatives contribute a significant amount of their time, energy and creativity to running effective student organisations and working with universities to improve the student experience. In light of this, universities should recognise that students undertaking these roles cannot engage in full-time study or part-time work, so they need to be supported during their office bearing tenure.” (UTS Students’ Association)

“I feel that paying the secretariat means that they do not need to work outside of the guild allowing for more work to be devoted to the organisation.” (Edith Cowan Student Guild)

“Payment certainly increases involvement at Monash Gippsland. Students take a more professional approach and we’ve been able to focus on providing what is best for the students we represent and put politics in the background. From MUGSU’s standpoint, this has been extremely beneficial.” (Monash University Gippsland Student Union)

“It means that students from low-SES backgrounds are able to devote their time to student representation, rather than working.” (University of Sydney SRC)

“People who are not eligible for Centrelink or do not have financial support are excluded from being effective student representatives as they have to work to pay living expenses. These students are already struggling to balance the workload of study and paid employment and simply do not have the time to participate in student representation.” (Newcastle University Students Association)

Dissenting views came from two of the student organisations run exclusively by unpaid volunteers:

“Paid student reps risk being compromised and becoming elitist. The element of volunteering is a commonality shared with clubs and societies and ensures a fraternal grounding.” (University of New England Guild)

“Keeping the roles volunteer ensures that students with genuine concerns for students are elected.” (Griffith University SRC).

The SSAF arrangements have not led to a generalised increase in office bearer honoraria. 71% of respondents reported that there had been no changes in office bearer honoraria, and most of the rest reported only minor changes. The exception was Flinders University where the creation of a new Students Association in 2012 meant there were paid office bearers for the first time since collapse of the old Students Association in 2007. The only other reported changes were:

“This is the first year that the SRC President is receiving an honorarium. However this is not coming out of the SSAF.” (Adelaide University Union)

“Queer officers (two), Mature Age officers (two), Women’s officers (two), Indigenous officers (two) were unpaid positions prior to SSAF introduction. Activities Vice-President was 0.8” (Curtin Student Guild)

“Funding for Postgrad Associate Exec honorarium introduced 2012.” (Murdoch University Student Guild)

“Honoraria increased for the first time in many years in 2012 and is now tied to CPI.” (University of Melbourne Student Union)

“An extra campus officer was created and the 3 lower paid councillors pay was increased 10%” (James Cook University Students Association)

5.4 Student Elections

The SSAF legislation’s list of allowable activities does not include funding to conduct elections for student representatives. However, the National Student Representation guidelines (3.2.3) contain the requirements that higher education providers must provide “enrolled students with the opportunity to participate in a process to democratically elect student representatives” and that in meeting this obligation the provider “is to meet the necessary and reasonable costs of conducting valid and transparent polls for this purpose. Reasonable support might, for example, include funding for polling booths and ballot papers.”

Has the university allowed for the SSAF funding to be allocated towards your student organisation elections, or alternatively, has the university established or supported its own elections exclusively for student representatives?

Yes: 7

No: 12

TABLE 5: STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE ELECTION ARRANGEMENTS

Adelaide University Union	No, they have not allowed for that. Elections for AUU Board Directors, SRC reps and NUS delegates are conducted by the AUU. Elections for University Council, faculty representatives etc are conducted by the University. University-run elections are online. AUU elections are paper ballots.
ANU Students Association	\$20,000 is budgeted in order to run ANUSA’s annual elections. The elections are carried out by ACT Elections.
CQU Students Association	All internal governance matters are controlled by the students (includes allocations for elections). All are online for the 9 student elected positions.
CDU Students Association	The SSAF funding has not been provided for any elections specifically however the university provides for our returning officer and allows for online voting. CDUSA produces advertising for nominations and the elections along with the returning officer calling for nominations and announcing elections via email to the student body.
Curtin Student Guild	The guild has previously used the university grant to pay for the elections, which are online. Elections will continue to be funded by us, through the grant.
Edith Cowan Student Guild	No. We still pay for our own elections.
Flinders University Students Association	SSAF cannot be used for Student Council elections. We have online elections that run from 3-5 academic days in the second semester.
Griffith University SRC	The university has its own non-preferential e-ballot, electoral system, however it is open to amendment.
La Trobe Student Union	Physical paper ballot. Funding for the elections forms a part of our funding agreement.
Lismore and External Undergraduate Student Association (LEXUS), Southern Cross	We do not know if the university will allow SSAF funding to be allocated towards our elections. We will not know until our annual budget has been approved. I believe this should come from core/base funding, as it does not fall under any of the Schedule 1 activities. Additionally, we do not know if SSAF funds were used for the election process of the new SRC the university created to consult regarding SSAF expenditure.
Monash Students Association (Clayton)	For the MSA we are able to fund our elections as they pertain to student representation and we have different streams of revenue. For political clubs not one cent of SSAF is spent on their activities.
Monash University Gippsland Student Union	Part of our funding is spent on elections. We provide a link through the university portal login page to all Gippsland students as well as have physical polling stations in the busiest area of our campus. The physical polling stations use iPads to enable students to vote online. We no longer deal with paper ballots.
Murdoch University Student Guild	Elections are held online, which is preferred because of the significant number of fully external students. SSAF funding has not been allocated to elections, and no significant changes have been made.
Newcastle University Students Association	Paper ballots are used.
RMIT Student Union	Paper ballot for student organisation elections, Electronic ballot for University Council, and Student Experience Advisory Committee – both operated 100% by the university. Uncertain on funding in this case.

Swinburne Student Union	The University refuses to fund Student Union elections; they do however fund elections for the Student Representative Council (the student consultative committee within the university-owned entity). The Student Union elections have consistently throughout the years been physically taken on campus via ballot and have involved preferential voting. Recently the University changed their elections to online and a 'first past the post' system of elections. After submitting a Freedom of Information Request, the Student Union received the students' comments for the election in which the majority of comments regarding the type of election were negative stating that online elections were worse than previous elections that occurred physically on campus.
Sydney University SRC	Paper ballot
University of Melbourne Student Union	The University has not interfered with the normal running of UMSU annual elections. Money is set aside in the UMSU annual budget to allow for a tender process (for independent election companies), which is conducted by the UMSU electoral tribunal (made up of lawyers in the University). The elections are paper ballot.
University of NSW Arc	Yes- Arc's existing funding agreement pre-SSAF has been continued after the introduction of the SSAF (with a \$400K increase). The University has indicated that it believes the funding agreement to be entirely SSAF-applicable expenditure, in other words the SSAF has been used to offset student organisation funding. Arc has always run student elections for a variety of bodies and continues to do so. SRC – Physical ballot Postgrad Council – Online Arc Board of Directors – Online Student Development Committee (Clubs/Volunteering) – Online
USC Student Guild	SSAF funding has not been used to fund elections. However the university has provided electronic voting systems for use by the Student Guild.
UniSA Students Association (Previously UniLife)	UniSA continues to fund USASA to hold online elections for student representatives. They are currently happy for USASA to run and manage this process.
University of WA Student Guild	Yes, the Guild receives funding to run its own elections. The elections are paper ballot elections controlled by the Guild, based on regulations enforced by the WA Electoral Commission.

There are some questions that arise from these guidelines that have led to different applications of the guidelines across campuses:

- Are the democratically elected student representatives only those who serve in SSAF consultation processes or can this funding requirement be extended more generally to student organisation elections?
- Are universities required to conduct their own separate elections for the student representatives to participate in the SSAF consultation process?
- Can the representatives required for the SSAF consultation be drawn directly from elected student representatives of existing student organisations (i.e. appointed onto the SSAF consultation committee)?

The ministerial review drafted several changes to the guidelines that give the universities greater clarity that they

can appoint student organisation representatives to SSAF consultation committees and thus would not be required to run separate elections. The result of the re-drafted guidelines through parliament was unknown at time of publication as they were in the period of disallowance in both houses. If the period of disallowance exhausts without any disallowances, the new guidelines will take effect on January 1, 2014.

The vast majority of survey respondents fund the conduct of student organisation elections either as part of their base funding contract with the university (non-SSAF) or is cross-subsidised from student organisation commercial services.

On-line ballots are now becoming more common for student organisation elections, and are even more widespread for university-run elections to committee positions.

5.5 Independence

The SSAF Student Representation Guidelines create no obligation for universities to fund student representative organisations outside of the SSAF consultation process. There are currently no independent student representative organisations at Macquarie and Ballarat. There are concerns that the reliance on non-SSAF university grants to fund student representation may compromise the capacity of student organisations to be independent and therefore represent student interests in the most effective way possible.

Do you believe the implementation of the SSAF has affected the independence of your student organisation?

Yes: 11

No: 14

Has the university threatened your student organisation's funding or made the funding contingent upon certain requirements or behaviours (yes/no)?

Yes: 9

No: 15

Has the university questioned or challenged any of your funding decisions or activities in 2012 or 2013 (yes/no)?

Yes: 8

No: 14

Has the university made moves to see that it has greater control over your student organisation's finances by, for example, suggesting it audits your student organisation through its own means in addition to your student organisation's auditing procedures already in place?

Yes: 3

No: 12

COMMENTS AND MAJOR ISSUES

The SSAF Student Representation Guidelines in effect codify the VSU-era shift from the English-Scottish university traditions of student control of student affairs to the American tradition where student representation functions to facilitate more service-delivery with less independence. In essence many student representatives feel that they are compromised in their capacity to fearlessly represent their members interests against the university administration lest they risk losing funding (either the university grant or the SSAF-eligible activities the organisation may run).

Different attitudes of university executives

There is a lot of variance across campuses, which reflects the different attitudes of senior university managers to student representation. A few Vice-Chancellors have openly welcomed the right of student representatives to fearlessly and independently represent their members. However, this is not always the case. Sometimes threats are made explicitly by university administrations but more commonly student representatives feel pressure to self-censor. Comments made by respondents include:

"The threats made were never stated directly but simply implied through action. The university, during 2012, made it perfectly clear that they could not consult or work with LEXUS because they did not like us speaking out against the way they were handling SSAF and on other matters unrelated to SSAF. Our approach to the university during this time was very stern when needed but we never reacted inappropriately or without reason. The university took our stances as an excuse for not being able to work with or consult LEXUS instead of working with us on a solution. During the heat of our SSAF dispute, our funding (and funding to the other SRAs) was ceased." (LEXUS)

"Must not do anything that tarnishes the University's reputation." (Flinders University Students' Association)

"Not excessively. Any questions were always asked in a good-natured manner, with no malice or "challenge" intended." (Adelaide University Union)

"Now that the student publication is funded by SSAF, there is more scrutiny involved in terms of not freely voicing opinions and there is careful choice in advertising as the Media Committee doesn't wish to jeopardise their funding." (Swinburne Student Union)

Increased reporting requirements and micro-management

Student organisation and financial auditing and reporting requirements under SSAF are generally similar to those under VSU (quarterly income and expenditure statements to the university, independent auditors). There has been pressure from some universities to use the same auditors as the university.

“Under section 13(4) of Statute No 4, the Student Guild is required to provide the University Council with quarterly statements of income and expenditure.” (Curtin University Student Guild)

“Under Dept of Fair Trade, we are classed as Tier 1 and therefore require an external bookkeeper and an external auditor. Clauses in the service level agreements on which we are all waiting, state that SCU may audit the books; also full financial statements must be produced annually during the bid process.” (Southern Cross University Coffs Harbour Students Association)

“In 2012 the SSAF agreement requires SSU to provide quarterly audits to the University, the SSU feel that we are getting closer to the University requesting that it makes audits through its own means.” (Swinburne Student Union)

“The university has suggested that the Students’ Association be incorporated into its own auditing system despite having our own independent auditors.” (UTS Students Association)

At least one university has taken the micro-management of student organisation funds to the point where every SSAF expenditure has to be signed off by a university financial controller (Office of Student Engagement):

“The University has said that one of their staff must approve every dollar spent, similarly the money must only be kept and allocated to University bank accounts, and students do not have any control over any SSAF funds. All SSAF funds are requested by FUSA, but proposed and approved by the university, purchased by the university, and kept by the university.” (Flinders University Students Association)

At the end of the year the Association must also hand back to the university any unspent part of its non- SSAF grant from the university. This precludes the Association from building any financial reserves.

University imposed restructuring of student organisations

Universities are also using their financial powers to attempt to re-organise student organisation structures against the wishes of student representatives.

Monash University has been conducting an external KPMG review of student organisation structures across its multiple campuses:

“It was suggested that all Monash Student Organisations take part in a review conducted by KPMG. The review took place; every student organisation knew the end goal of Monash was to create one union. Every student organisation strongly opposed the suggestion citing it would probably just give Monash a further excuse to cut student association funding. The reasoning being this would result in a decline in student activity, advocacy and support.” (Monash University Gippsland Student Union)



Section Six: NUS Student Control Of Student Affairs Ratings

NUS HAS USED THE SAME METHODOLOGY FOR THE RATINGS AS WAS USED IN OUR 2012 REPORT:

Range of Student Controlled Services (40% weighting) score derived from our audit of on range of student controlled services measured against historic range of services run by student organisations before VSU (service categories derived from Australian Vice Chancellor’s Committee Survey of Student Organisations, 2003)

Student Representation Resourcing (40% weighting) score based on (1) spread and size of honoraria for student representatives, (2) number of policy and academic rights/welfare casework staff employed by student representative controlled organisation, (3) level of other professional and

administrative support for student representative controlled organisation, (4) involvement of student organisation representatives on university committees and engagement with VCs, DVCs or Pro-VCs. The four indicators are equally weighted.

Quality of Negotiations with Uni and future transfer of services (20% weighting) score is derived from the survey responses and take into account the quality of university negotiations and consultations with student organisations and the student body. The score also reflects commitments by universities to transfer services back to student control.

Universities without independent student run organisations are omitted.

	Range of Student Controlled Services (40%)	Student Representation Resourcing (40%)	Quality of Consultation and Negotiations with Uni and future transfer of services (20%)	Total (out of 10)
Adelaide Uni	30	26	15	7.1
Australian National Uni	40	25	12	7.2
Central Queensland University	15	22	13	5.0
Charles Darwin Uni	5	7	5	1.7
Curtin	35	30	9	7.4
Edith Cowan	8	25	12	4.5
Flinders	13	24	8	4.5
Griffith - Brisbane	5	10	2	1.7
James Cook	30	28	15	7.3
La Trobe	25	33	15	7.3
Monash-Clayton	20	30	12	6.2
Monash – Gippsland	20	20	8	4.8
Murdoch	34	27	12	7.3
Newcastle Uni - Callaghan	8	16	5	2.9
Newcastle University - Ourimbah	8	7	0	1.5
RMIT	20	34	14	6.8
Southern Cross	2	5	9	1.6
Swinburne	5	11	10	2.6
University of Melbourne	30	36	15	8.1
University of New England	7	9	11	2.7
University of NSW	30	33	15	7.8
University of South Australia	10	22	12	4.4
University of Sunshine Coast	9	18	15	4.2
University of Sydney	38	36	12	8.6
UTS	32	31	15	7.8
University of Tasmania	13	21	12	4.6
University of WA	35	34	9	7.8
University of Wollongong	8	9	5	2.2
Victoria University	8	13	10	3.1

THE TOP 10 RANKED UNIVERSITIES (OUT OF A SCORE 10) ARE:

University of Sydney: **8.6**

University of Melbourne: **8.1**

University of NSW: **7.8**

University of Technology, Sydney: **7.8**

University of Western Australia: **7.8**

Curtin University **7.4**

James Cook University **7.3**

La Trobe University **7.3**

Murdoch University **7.3**

Australian National University **7.2**

Appendix One: Summary of 2013 Campus President Questionnaire Results

A: CONSULTATION WITH THE STUDENT ORGANISATIONS

How were democratically elected student representatives consulted (select all that apply and provide details)?

- h. A committee was formed by the university, with student representative members - 20
- i. Student representatives had one on one meeting/s with university administration - 11
- j. Student representatives were asked to present proposals - 13
- k. Student representatives initiated process of consultation - 3
- l. Student representatives within university structure only were consulted - 1
- m. Student organisation was not consulted - 3
- n. Other (describe)

Were elected international student representatives consulted?

- Yes - 17
- No - 12

How would you rate the consultation with democratically elected student representatives?

- e. Outstanding – genuine consultation that took into account the views of student representatives and developed proposals accordingly – 3
- f. Good – university made an effort to engage with student representatives, but it could have been better/Could be improved – 16
- g. Tokenistic – students were asked their opinions but they were not taken into account by the university when distributing SSAF revenue – 7
- h. Condemned – consultation with student representatives was non-existent or hostile – 4

Would you recommend the process of consultation your university undertook in 2013 with student representatives be included as an example of best practice (yes/no?)

- Yes - 6
- No - 21
- N/A - 1

B: CONSULTATION WITH THE STUDENT BODY

How was the student body consulted (if at all)?

- f. Survey online - 21
- g. Forum(s) - 4
- h. Focus groups - 8
- i. Student organisation only - 7
- j. Other – 10

Was consultation with students organised through the student organisation or through the university?

- g. Completely through the university with no consultation of student reps - 11
- h. Mostly through the university but student representatives were consulted as to the methodology – 7.5
- i. Partnership between the university and student representatives – 3.5
- j. Mostly through student representatives but with some university input - 5
- k. Completely through the student organisation - 1
- l. N/A - 2

How would you rate your university's consultation with students?

- f. Great - 1
- g. Good - 10
- h. Pass - 5
- i. Bad – 10
- j. Non-existent – 3

Were different cohorts of students targeted for their views? (Select all that apply)

- k. International students - 8
- l. Postgraduate students - 8
- m. Mature age students - 1
- n. Part time students - 2
- o. ATSI students - 1
- p. Different cohorts were not consulted
- q. N/A, all student were targeted as a whole - 19
- r. There was no student consultation - 3
- s. Undergrad - 1
- t. External - 1

Were the opinions of students taken into account by the university in allocating the SSAF?

- f. Yes, consultation was genuine, they took on board feedback, and altered proposals based on feedback - 6
- g. To an extent - 11
- h. Only very minor things taken on board - 4
- i. Not at all, it was an obfusatory exercise - 6
- j. N/A - 2

Were students at your university, or student representatives offered the opportunity to publish the SSAF priorities for 2012, or 2013 (if information is available)?

Yes - 11
No - 15

Would you recommend the process of consultation your university undertook with the student body be included as an example of best practice (yes/no)?

Yes - 3
No - 23

C: NEGOTIATIONS

How would you rate the negotiation process at your university (if your negotiations have not been finalised pick the most appropriate)?

- f. Excellent: collaborative, constructive, university took into account point of view of students and student representatives and was pro-active about engagement and negotiations - 6
- g. Good: positive, reasonably consultative though students' views could have stronger input and consideration - 7
- h. Satisfactory: room for improvement but overall sufficient negotiations took place - 7
- i. Bad: did not listen to student perspectives and went ahead with its own plans, negotiations if they occurred at all were unproductive or ignored - 7
- j. Non-existent - 1

How has the negotiation process affected your organisation's ability to fulfil its role this year?

- f. Signed an agreement in 2012 so not at all - 10
- g. Signed an agreement early in 2013 so there was minimal impact on functions - 4
- h. Agreement was not signed until recently (or is yet to be signed) but organisation is being funded under 2012 or previous arrangements so no significant impact - 9
- i. Agreement only recently signed and funding uncertainty seriously impeded the ability of the organisation to function
- j. Agreement yet to be signed and funding uncertainty is currently seriously affecting the ability of the organisation to function or consider long-term arrangements - 7

Has the signing of any funding agreement been significantly hampered by bureaucratic processes, delays or changes in university situation i.e. conditions beyond the control of the student organisation or the students they represent (yes/no)?

Yes: 12
No: 13

Has the negotiation process differed greatly from the process adopted in 2012, to your knowledge?

Yes: 6
No: 10
N/A - 5

Would you recommend the negotiation process at your university as an example of best practice (yes/no)?

Yes – 7
No - 21

D: FUNDING AGREEMENTS AND OUTCOMES

What kind of agreement have you signed with your university?

Interim - 5
Multi-year -6
Base funding agreement with additional SSAF funding agreed - 5
Yet to sign an agreement for 2013 – 15

How has your funding situation changed under the SSAF compared to VSU – in 2012 and in 2013?

f. Dramatically improved - 9
g. Improved - 12
h. Funding level is the same as under VSU - 2
i. Funding has decreased - 4
j. University is not funding the student organisation – 1

In your opinion, do you believe the university has used SSAF expenditure in ways that explicitly contradict the wishes of students, or for reasons that would render it in breach of the SSAF intent and purpose (please answer as best as you can, prior and extensive knowledge of SSAF legislation and Guidelines is not assumed) (yes/no)?

Yes - 6
No – 17

Is the university supportive of transferring services to student organisations?

f. Yes, this is already in progress - 3
g. Yes, we are working on a plan with the university - 4
h. Maybe this has not been discussed yet - 6
i. No the university wants to maintain the status quo – 10
j. No the university is attempting to take over services currently run by student organisations – 6

Have you claimed any student services back from the university, or vice versa?

Yes: 11
No: 16

What proportion of the SSAF is going towards student organisations?

e. All - 0
f. Most - 4
g. Some - 24
h. None – 2

E: STUDENT REPRESENTATION AND INDEPENDENCE

To what extent are democratically elected student representatives involved in university decision-making processes?

f. Heavily involved: students sit on all or most university boards, committees and University Council or Senate, have an active input in decision making processes, and the university makes an effort to consult student representatives - 9
g. Quite involved: students sit on some university boards and committees, but their input is not always taken on board - 13
h. Somewhat involved: students sit on student consultative committees but they do not sit on any other boards or committees - 3
i. Not involved - 1
j. Excluded: the university handpicks students to consult with, these students are not part of an independent student organisation - 1

How would you describe your relationship with the university administration?

g. Regularly (i.e. once a month or more) meet with the VC and they listen to my opinions – 3.5
h. Regularly meet with DVCs/PVCs and they listen to my opinions and/ or consider some of my suggestions – 9.5
i. Have regular meetings with high-level university management (e.g. VC, DVCs/PVCs) but they do not take student concerns into account - 4
j. Have occasional meetings with VC, but most of my contact is with a relevant DVC and they take my opinions and suggestions reasonably seriously - 5
k. Have limited but positive relationships with university management - 6
l. Have no access to university administration

Are there any major changes to student representation that have occurred since 2012, i.e. Composition of University Council.

Yes: **8**
No: **9**

Has the university threatened your student organisation's funding or made the funding contingent upon certain requirements or behaviours (yes/no)?

Yes: **9**
No: **15**

Are any student representatives at your university paid for their job?

Yes: **21**
No: **6**

Has the university questioned or challenged any of your funding decisions or activities in 2012 or 2013 (yes/no)?

YES: **8**
NO: **14**

Has the university allowed for the SSAF funding to be allocated towards your student organisation elections, or alternatively, has the university established or supported its own elections exclusively for student representatives?

Yes: **7**
No: **12**

Has the university made moves to see that it has greater control over your student organisation's finances by, for example, suggesting it audits your student organisation through its own means in addition to your student organisation's auditing procedures already in place?

Yes: **3**
No: **12**

Do you believe the implementation of the SSAF has affected the independence of your student organisation?

Yes: **11**
No: **14**



Appendix Two: Major University Takeover of Student Services or Service Providers since 2006

MAJOR UNIVERSITY TAKEOVER OF STUDENT SERVICES OR SERVICE PROVIDERS SINCE 2006 (ALL PUBLIC UNIS)

Charles Darwin University	Charles Darwin Student Union defunded in 2007 and subsequently closed down, student services run directly by university (or private contractors), student advocacy service run from university equity and support service. The university has established a self-funding company, Charles Darwin University Amenities Ltd. for sports and postgraduate services. In 2011 a Students Association was established but has minimal resources. The Charles Darwin University Amenities Ltd. has recently taken on the advocacy service.
Charles Sturt University	Most of the non-representative student services provided by the previous campus based student organisations have either been discontinued or are provided directly by the university.
Flinders University	All representative and service organisations shut down in 2006/7, and service provision occurred through the university controlled Flinders Campus Community Services (the management council consists of a university appointed chair, five external university appointees, two appointed students and three elected students). The university is the sole legal member. A new Student Association was formed in 2012 and runs advocacy, welfare, employment and student media services.
Macquarie University	In 2007 Students At Macquarie (the University Union), the Student Council and Sports and Recreation were disbanded. The university established a company called Campus Experience. After brief attempts to revive student organisations the university has again abolished them.
La Trobe University	Student-run University Union and Sports shut down post-VSU. The non-representative/advocacy services were taken over by the university-owned student services company, La Trobe Guild that was connected to the university Division of Student Services. In 2009 the university agreed to merge part of the Guild functions with the SRC to create the La Trobe Student Union. The university has kept the commercial and sporting facilities and operations and runs them directly through the Division of Student Services.
Monash-Clayton/ Caufield/ Peninsula	The major commercial trading operations were run under Monyx (a joint company of campus student organisations and the university). Monyx was wound up after 2007. Most commercial services have come under direct university control. Monash Students Association (Clayton) and Monash Student Union (Caufield/Peninsula) run advocacy services. MSA also runs a wholefood restaurant.
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology	The university has taken over the commercial services and sports facilities that were previously run by RMIT Union. Childcare, the university also now runs tax advice service and legal services. The separate RMIT Student Union continues to run the advocacy services.
Southern Cross University	Student organisations at the main Lismore campus have been wound down, revived and then in 2012 shut down again. The student-controlled University Union was shut down in 2006 and replaced with a university company, UniLife. A small range of student services are also run by the university's Office of Sport and Cultural Affairs.

Swinburne University	The Student Union was defunded after 2006 but is still running in a minimal capacity on reserves. University has established a company Swinburne Student Amenities Association that is now funded to run many of the services previously run by Student Union including academic advocacy, with the university as the sole member. Recently the Student Union has received a small university grant to run events and a student welfare collective.
University of Adelaide	In 2008 the student run Adelaide University Union relinquished control of Union House and the commercial services operating from the building to the university. This was in exchange for a 10-year funding guarantee from the university to cover loss of revenue due to VSU. AUU continues to run the welfare/advocacy services and is co-owner of the university bookshop. Sports disaffiliated from AUU and negotiated separate funding agreement with the university.
University of Ballarat	Following VSU the university took over the commercial operations run by the Students' Association. The Students' Association was formally dissolved in 2010.
University of Canberra	Non-representative/advocacy services were taken over by a university service company, University of Canberra Union with the university being the sole legal member. The separate Students Association runs the advocacy service and a student residential hall.
University of Newcastle	The student run University Union at main Callaghan campus was wound down and replaced with a university company, UoN Services.
University of New England	Student organisations were shut down and replaced with Services UNE (Student Central), a university company that runs the commercial services and offers academic and welfare advocacy. Sports continues as separate university run entity. A student newspaper that was out of print post-VSU was revived since the SSAF through the recently-established undergraduate guild (which has now merged with the postgraduate organisation to become the UNE Students. Association). UNE SA is funded on a project basis.
University of Queensland	As a condition of its funding agreement with university, the University of Queensland Union, relinquished ownership of its substantial building complex to the university.
University of South Australia	Since 2006 the University has taken over the commercial services and facilities, The Students Association still runs advocacy service.
University of Southern Queensland	The university in 2013 has taken over most of the Guild's retail services in return for allowing the Guild to continue to commercially operate the fitness and sports centre.
University of Sunshine Coast	The Student Guild was defunded after VSU leaving it reliant on minimal voluntary fee income. The university moved the Guild from its central building (now the University Club) to a demountable on the edge of campus. Guild dissolved in 2009. This was revived in 2011 and in 2013 is now getting funding for advocacy, welfare, and clubs.
University of Tasmania	At the end of 2011 Tasmania University Union sold its commercial operations and extensive student housing service to the university after the uni threatened to take back about \$300,000 of its \$750,000 funding grant to TUU as 'commercial rent' on the facilities.

Appendix Three: Best Practice Guidelines for SSAF Consultations

In the 2012 survey report the NUS President for that year, Donherra Walmsley, developed Best Practice Guidelines for the SSAF consultations. They continue to be just as relevant in 2013.

NUS Best Practice Guidelines for the Student Services and Amenities Fee Consultations

1. CONSULTATION WITH STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

The National Union of Students recommends that the following principles and practices be applied in consulting with student representatives regarding the allocation of the Student Services and Amenities Fee.

Principles:

1.1 Genuine and collaborative consultation:

The opinions of student representatives should be taken into account when developing a plan for the SSAF expenditure. Feedback provided by student representatives should be factored in to university decisions. Consultation should be meaningful and ongoing, rather than just a 'box ticking' exercise.

1.2 Fair consultation:

Student representatives should be given adequate time to prepare any necessary papers, e.g. – proposals for SSAF expenditure, formal feedback on university spending priorities, etc. Student representatives should be given a reasonable amount of time to consult with other members of the representative organisation as well as the general student body before being expected to make a decision on behalf of students regarding SSAF expenditure.

What constitutes a reasonable amount of time will vary across different universities, and NUS recommends that universities consult their student representatives on what they believe is a fair and reasonable timeline for them.

1.3 Diverse consultation:

Legislation requires that international student representatives and postgraduate student representatives be consulted in the distribution of the SSAF. NUS recommends that student organisation presidents be invited to nominate any other elected representatives they may wish to attend the consultation meetings (e.g. – Mature Age student representatives, regional campus representatives, student organisation secretaries/treasurers).

Practices:

1.1 NUS recommends setting up a committee comprised of the relevant university decision makers, as well as student representatives as outlined in principle three. NUS recommends that the committee:

a) have a majority of student representatives, or that university representation and student representation be at least equal. University representatives should not outnumber student representatives.

b) not preclude one-on-one consultation between university representatives and student representatives.

1.2 NUS recommends that student organisations be invited to submit proposals for projects/services that they may wish to operate to this committee.

1.3 NUS recommends that universities put any proposals they have regarding SSAF expenditure to this committee for feedback as outlined in principles one and two.

1.4 NUS recommends that where possible, services be run by independent, democratically elected student organisations. In the case of newer organisations without significant existing infrastructure, this may involve developing a 3-5 year plan for service transfer, should the student representatives express an interest in engaging in this process.

1.5 NUS recommends that the committee set up to negotiate the SSAF report directly to the relevant university decision making body, rather than being forced to report through several layers of committees, thereby diluting the student voice.

2. CONSULTATION WITH THE STUDENT BODY

The National Union of Students recommends that the following principles and practices be applied in consulting with the student body regarding the allocation of the Student Services and Amenities Fee.

Principles:

2.1 Effective communication with the student body:

In order for consultation with the student body to yield useful results, students need to understand what they are being asked and why. Information given to the student body needs to be communicated clearly and in language that students will understand. Student organisations can assist universities in this regard.

2.2 Student involvement in consultation design:

Student representatives should be involved in the design of any consultation plan in order to ensure that it is developed in a student-friendly way.

2.3 Holistic and genuine consultation:

Consultation with the student body can be very fragmented. There should be a cohesive plan that is developed in partnership between the university and the student organisations timing of consultation with students is important. Student feedback must be seriously considered when developing university spending priorities and students must be made aware of how their input has affected the decision making process. Students will not participate in consultation processes if the feedback they give is not taken seriously.

Practices:

2.1 NUS recommends that universities and student organisations collaborate to develop a plan for consultation with the student body. Consultation can include but is not limited to surveys, fora, and focus groups. NUS does not believe that consultation conducted via social media such as Facebook and Twitter is sufficient, though these channels can certainly be used to promote other more formal means of consultation.

2.2 NUS recommends that any consultation plan take into account the times in which students can reasonably be expected to respond – e.g. – releasing surveys during university holidays during which many students do not check their student email is poor practice. Ensuring that timing is appropriate can be done through collaborating with student representatives as suggested in recommendation one.

2.3 NUS recommends that a variety of means be used to consult with students about the expenditure of the SSAF. The following are the most common methods of consultation, and recommendations on how to use them effectively:

a) Surveys

i) Any surveys used to inform expenditure of the SSAF should be purpose-designed. Surveys that were designed to collect other information from students can be used to inform SSAF expenditure, but they should not be used as a substitute for purpose-designed SSAF surveys and consultation.

ii) Students are asked to fill out many surveys over the course of the year, and may suffer from survey fatigue. For this reason it is particularly important to clearly explain the purpose of the survey to students to ensure that they understand.

iii) The questions in the survey should be expressed in a way that is comprehensible to students. Simply presenting students with a list of the allowable spend items and asking them to select their top five without any explanation of what kinds of services fall under the allowable spend items is not adequate.

b) Forums

i) NUS recommends that any consultation forums be run in collaboration with student organisations.

ii) NUS recommends that at the commencement of any forum, the SSAF be clearly explained to students.

iii) NUS recommends that where student organisations exist, they be invited to give a presentation on the services they run and role they perform within the university at the commencement of any forum.

c) Focus Groups

i) NUS recommends that any focus groups be run in collaboration with student organisations.

ii) NUS recommends that at the commencement of any focus group, the SSAF be clearly explained to students.

iii) NUS recommends that where student organisations exist, they be invited to give a presentation on the services they run and role they perform within the university at the commencement of any focus group.

2.4 NUS recommends that all universities produce a document clearly explaining what the SSAF is and how it is being spent to be put on university websites and sent out to students via an all-student email.

2.5 NUS recommends that communication from universities to students about SSAF and its expenditure be checked by student representatives to ensure that it is comprehensible to students. This is a practice currently employed by the University of Melbourne.

2.6 NUS recommends that any reports on student consultation produced by universities should be provided on the university website so that students can see the results of the consultation.

Appendix Four: Details of Campus Office Bearers Honoraria Arrangements

Adelaide University Union	AUU President and SRC President both receive an honorarium of approximately \$25,000
ANU Students Association	The ANUSA Executive members receive honoraria, paid by the Association, for the year's work in office. The six Executive positions get a total amount of \$70,000 in honoraria each year. Each of the Department Officers receives \$2,500 each, paid annually.
CQU Students Association	President is paid an honorarium, not tied to workload
CDU Students Association	No office bearers are paid
Curtin Student Guild	President, Education Vice-President, Activities Vice-President – Full-time; General Secretary, Faculty representatives (four), Post-graduate President, International Student Committee President, Queer officers (two), Mature Age officers (two), Women's officers (two), Indigenous officers (two) – Part-time.
Edith Cowan Student Guild	The top five positions are paid. This is the president, education vice president, general secretary, chair of equity and diversity and the chair of social.
Flinders university Students Association	President: \$26,200 p.a. Gen Sec: \$10,000 p.a. OBs: \$3,000 p.a. General Council: \$2,000 p.a.
Griffith SRC	Not paid
LEXUS	Not paid
James Cook Students Association	President – 30 hours @ 100% APA VP – 25 hours @ 80% APA Campus Officer x3 – 20 hours @ 50% APA International, Equity, and Postgrad - 16 hours @ 30% APA
La Trobe Student Union	Yes, all Office Bearers at the LTSU are paid on a sliding scale from 0.75 FMW, 0.6 FMW, 0.5 FMW, 0.33 FMW and 0.25 FMW.
Monash Students Association (Clayton)	All MSA student office-bearers are paid an honorarium that is not much more than youth allowance for full-time members. President – 1.35 fraction Education (Academic Affairs), Education (Public Affairs), Lot's Wife Editors x 2, Activities chairperson – 1.0 fraction Secretary, Treasurer - .75 fraction Welfare, Environment and Social Justice, Women's - .70 fraction Female Queer, Indigenous, Male Queer - .50 fraction
Murdoch University Student Guild	MUGSU's entire board is paid an honorarium. The amount varies depending on the position. Meeting attendance fees are also paid, again the amount varies on the meeting (generally speaking its ~\$40).
Newcastle University Students' Association	NUSA President receives a wage set at the AGM of \$31/h for up to 20hrs per week. Other NUSA office bearers can claim an honorarium of \$15/h for up to 10 hrs.
RMIT Student Union	Honoraria for all roles at various rates per annum.
Southern Cross University – Coffs Harbour Students Association	Not paid
Swinburne Student Union	Student Union Honoraria allocation \$45,000 Scaled according to position. 21 council positions and 5 media committee positions, paid through Union reserves, 2012 was paid through SSAF.
Tasmania University Union	Only state council is paid a low honoraria
University of Melbourne Student Union	All UMSU office bearers are paid the same: \$19,500 full time, \$11,700 for half time (paid at 0.6)
University of New England Guild	Not paid
University of NSW Arc	Arc Chair: \$20k PGC President: \$18k SDC Convener: \$18k SRC President: \$18k All SRC Office Bearers: \$10k All PGC Office Bearers: \$10k

USC Student Guild	Not paid
UTS Students Association	The President, Education Vice-President and Secretary of the Students' Association are paid an honorarium. The President and Education Vice-President receive a full time sum of \$19,240 and the Secretary receives a sum that is quarter the full-time rate.
University of WA Student Guild	President paid full time minimum wage honorarium, PSA President paid half time minimum wage honorarium.
Victoria University Student Union	The executive student representatives are that are elected are paid a bursary for the equivalent of 8 hours a week. Campus executives are paid \$8,000 a term and there are five representatives, the vice president and the association presidents are paid the same. The President and general secretary is paid \$12,000 a year.
Wollongong University Students Association	WUSA President - \$15,000 honorarium





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