Australian National University

Student Services & Amenities Fee

Survey Report

October 2026



Executive summary

On 11 October 2011, the Australian Parliament passed legislation allowing universities and other higher education providers to charge a fee for student services and amenities of a non-academic nature. This fee is known as the Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF). The fee may be spent by higher education providers on items such as sporting and recreational activities, employment and career advice, childcare, financial advice and food services.

Under the Higher Education Support (Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy) Guidelines 2022, consultation is required to be undertaken with students about the specific uses of SSAF revenue. ANU conducts an annual student survey. The survey results are used by the University's SSAF recipients (these include: ANU Sport and Recreation Association, the Australian National University Students' Association (ANUSA), the Australian National University Student Media Inc. (Woroni), ANU Observer and the ANU Student Services) to develop and inform their programs and services for the following year.

The 2026 survey was open from Monday 24 August 2026 through to Sunday 6 September 2026. There were 622 responses to the survey, which is approximately 3.0% of the student cohort (headcount of 20,642), up from 337 responses (1.4%) in 2025. While this is an improvement in participation, the response rate remains too low to be representative, and results should be read as indicative. Domestic students were well represented, with 80% of respondents reporting to be domestic. About two in five respondents lived on campus. Undergraduate coursework students made up the majority of respondents at 63%, with postgraduate coursework and higher degree by research students comprising 14% and 17% respectively.

Awareness of SSAF remained high among respondents, with 94% reporting that they were aware of it (95% in 2025). Knowledge of the amenities and services that SSAF funds rose to 75% of those aware of the fee, up from 60% in 2025 and 65% in 2024, and the highest of the last three surveys. This suggests visibility measures are having some effect; however, one in four respondents who know about the fee still do not know what it funds, so further work to promote SSAF-funded services and amenities remains warranted.

When survey respondents were asked to rank SSAF priorities, medical, counselling and wellbeing services were ranked in the top three the most frequently; this is consistent with information gathered from other questions in the survey and with the 2025 results. Clubs, societies, sports and culture services ranked second. Student representation and advocacy services featured in the top three the least and was ranked lowest the most consistently with 2024 and 2025.

The top three services and amenities selected by students were:

1. Providing health or welfare services to students;
2. Supporting student clubs and societies; and
3. Providing food or non-alcoholic drink to students on an ANU campus.

The bottom three services and amenities selected by students were:

1. Supporting student discussion, debate and advocacy;
2. Supporting the orientation and transition of new students; and
3. Supporting students to produce and share creative, artistic and news media.

The top and bottom three services and amenities are the same as in the 2025 survey, and the top three appear in the same order.

Survey respondents were invited to share ideas in a free text box on how their SSAF should be used, and 248 did so (127 in 2025). The comments are largely reflective of both ranked priorities and the top three choices mentioned above. The most common themes were clubs and societies, health and wellbeing, and social events and community building, followed closely by cost-of-living support and food. Financial support, which was the most common theme in 2025, remained prominent. As in 2025, ANUSA and student media were mentioned multiple times, with comments both for and against funding these organisations, and around 8% of comments objected to SSAF supporting political causes.

89% of respondents indicated that they value participating in services and activities funded by SSAF, up from 84% in 2025 and 79% in 2024.

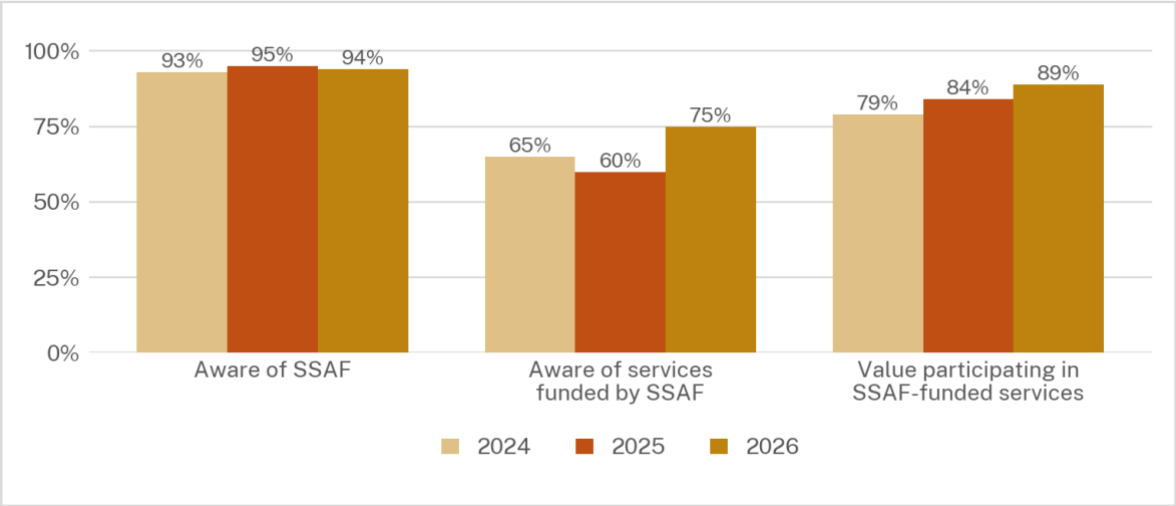
Two questions were new in 2026. ANUSA (365 respondents) and Library Services (357) were the organisations and services most commonly engaged with over the past 12 months. Self-rated engagement with student and campus life averaged 6.0 out of 10 and was markedly higher among students living on campus (7.1) than among those living off campus (5.2 for domestic and 5.7 for international students).

Three-year comparison

Key results from the 2024, 2025 and 2026 surveys. Percentages are calculated on those who answered each question.

	2024	2025	2026
Total responses	684	337	622
Response rate (share of student cohort)	3.9%	1.4%	3.0%
Aware of SSAF	93%	95%	94%
Aware of services funded by SSAF	65%	60%	75%
Value participating in SSAF-funded services	79%	84%	89%
Open-text responses	180	127	248
Undergraduate / postgraduate respondents	65% / 35%	64% / 36%	69% / 31%
Domestic students living off campus	57%	59%	51%
Top-ranked SSAF priority	Medical, counselling and wellbeing	Medical, counselling and wellbeing	Medical, counselling and wellbeing
Lowest-ranked SSAF priority	Student representation and advocacy	Student representation and advocacy	Student representation and advocacy

Awareness and value of SSAF, 2024–2026



Services and amenities selected, 2024–2026

Because the number of respondents differs each year, the table below shows each service's share of all selections in the "choose three" question.

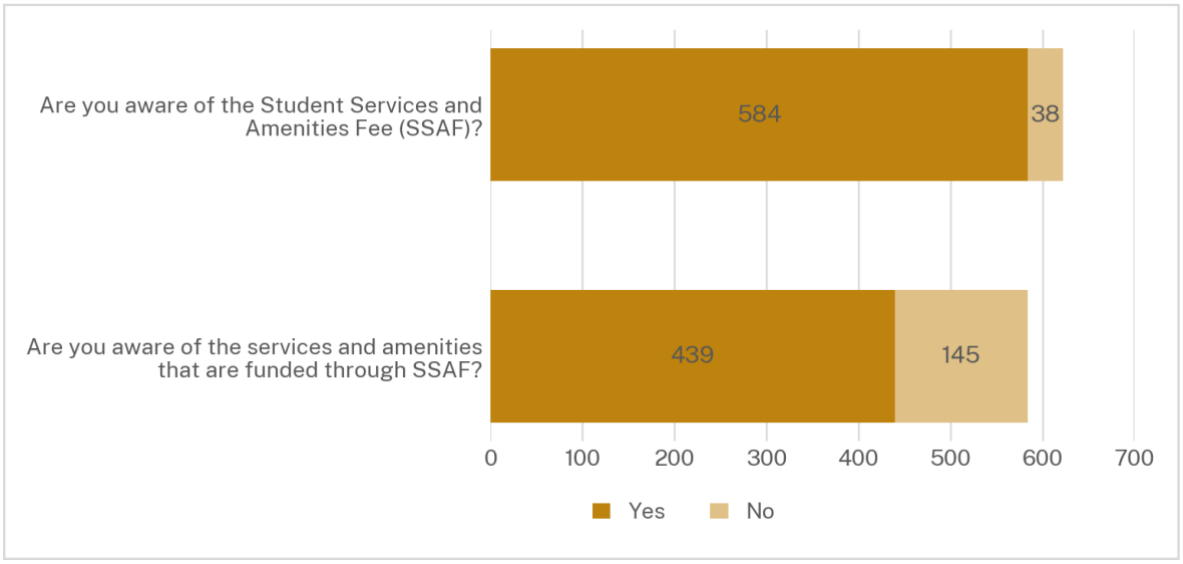
Service or amenity	2024	2025	2026
Providing health or welfare services to students	17.4%	17.1%	16.1%
Supporting student clubs and societies	10.6%	12.7%	13.7%
Providing food or non-alcoholic drink to students on an ANU campus	12.6%	11.0%	13.0%
Supporting sporting or recreational activities for students	6.9%	6.9%	8.8%
Helping students obtain employment or advice on careers	9.9%	8.7%	8.4%
Providing support for the specific needs of student cohorts	6.1%	5.6%	7.1%
Advocating for and representing students' interests at the University	4.9%	8.2%	6.4%
Helping students with financial support and advice	6.3%	6.7%	6.0%
Providing legal services and support to students	5.6%	5.4%	5.3%
Helping students develop skills for study	5.3%	5.4%	5.1%
Helping students secure accommodation	7.9%	4.1%	3.4%
Supporting students to produce and share creative, artistic and news media	2.6%	3.4%	3.1%
Supporting the orientation and transition of new students	1.8%	1.5%	1.7%
Supporting student discussion, debate and advocacy	2.0%	3.3%	1.7%
Total selections	1,579	989	1,835

Notable movements:

- Supporting student clubs and societies has increased its share each year, from 10.6% in 2024 to 13.7% in 2026.
- Helping students secure accommodation has declined each year, from 7.9% to 3.4%.
- Supporting sporting or recreational activities rose to 8.8%, after holding at 6.9% in 2024 and 2025.
- Advocating for and representing students' interests rose sharply in 2025 (8.2%) and eased in 2026 (6.4%), though it remains above its 2024 level.
- Providing health or welfare services has been the most selected item in all three years.

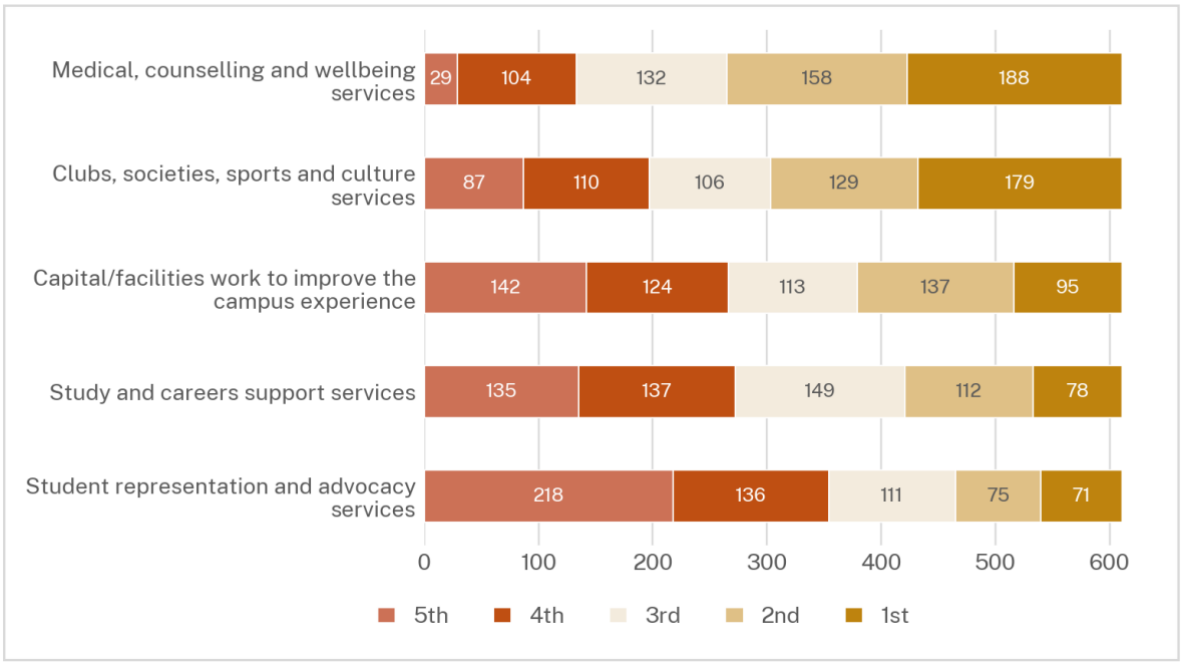
Survey results

Student awareness of SSAF



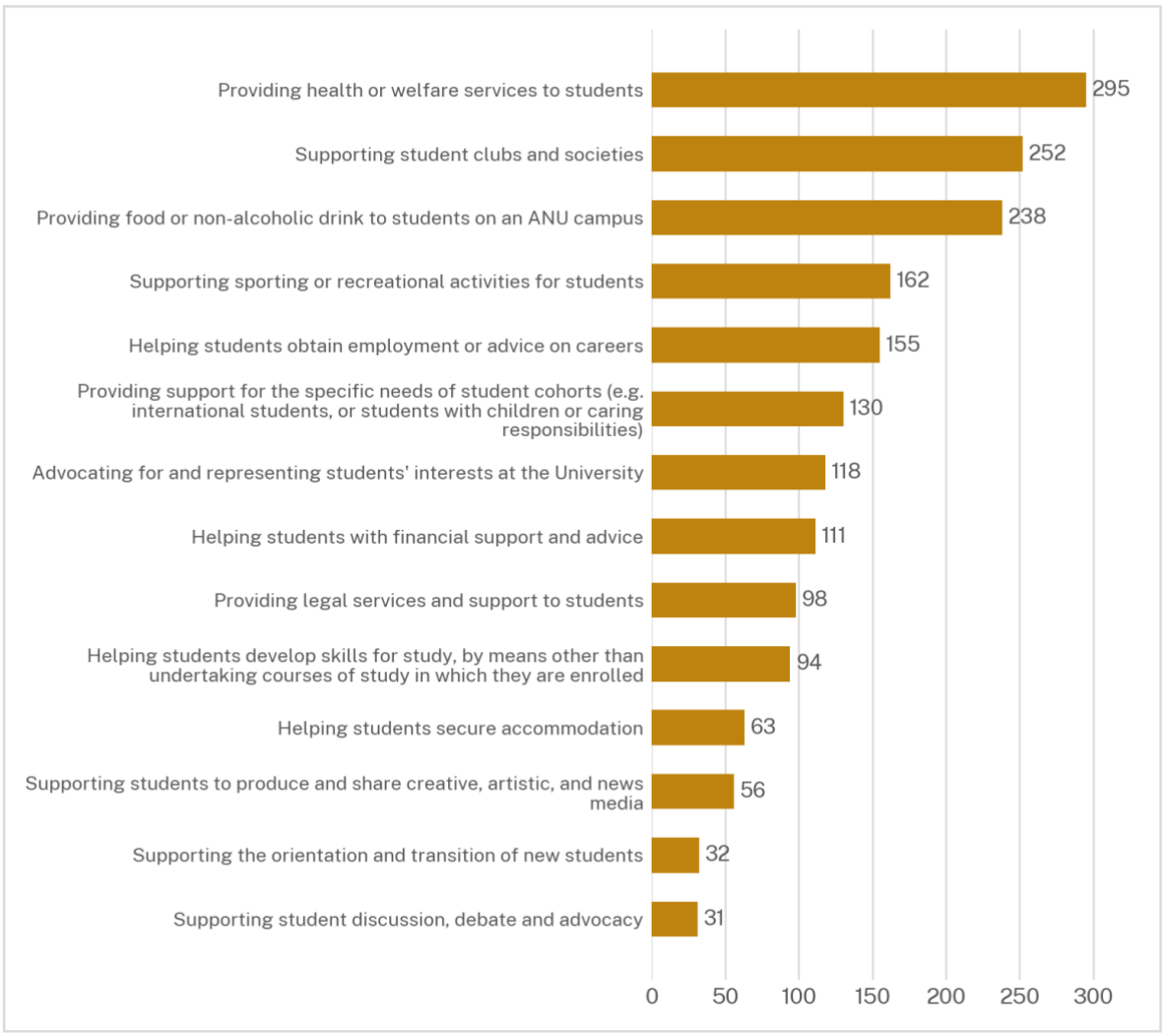
The second question was shown only to the 584 respondents who were aware of SSAF.

Please rank the following SSAF priorities in order of importance



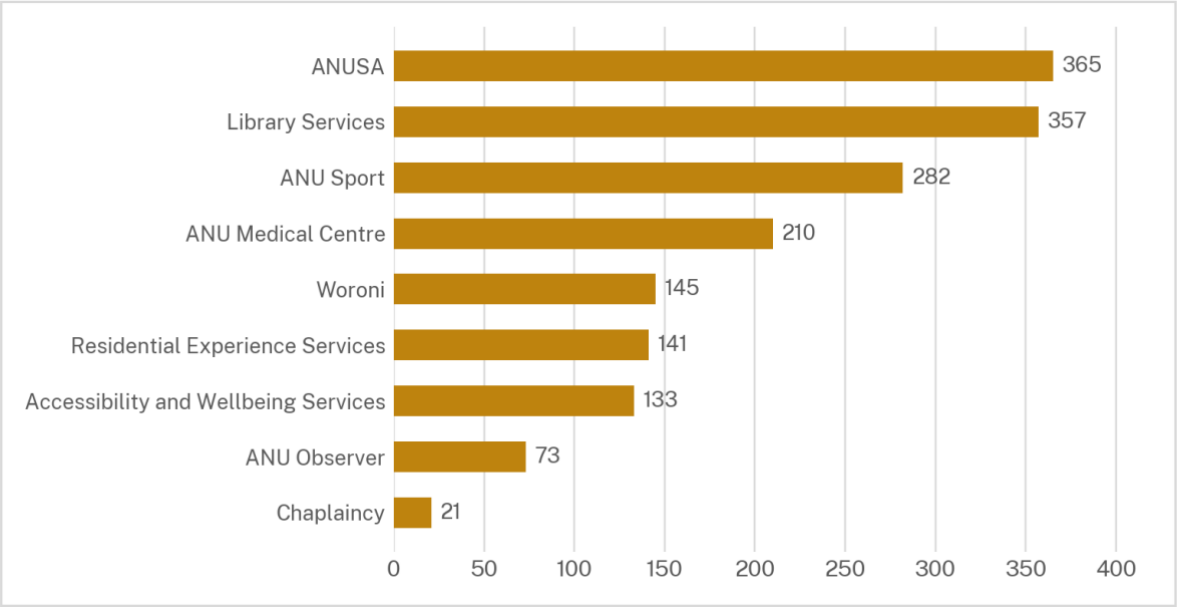
611 respondents. Ranked in order of average rank – lower is more important: Medical, counselling and wellbeing 2.39; Clubs, societies, sports and culture 2.67; Capital/facilities 3.13; Study and careers support 3.23; Student representation and advocacy 3.58.

In accordance with The Higher Education Support Act 2003, SSAF revenue must be spent on student services and amenities of a non-academic nature that fall within nineteen (19) defined service types provided below. Please choose three (3) items you would like to be supported in 2027.



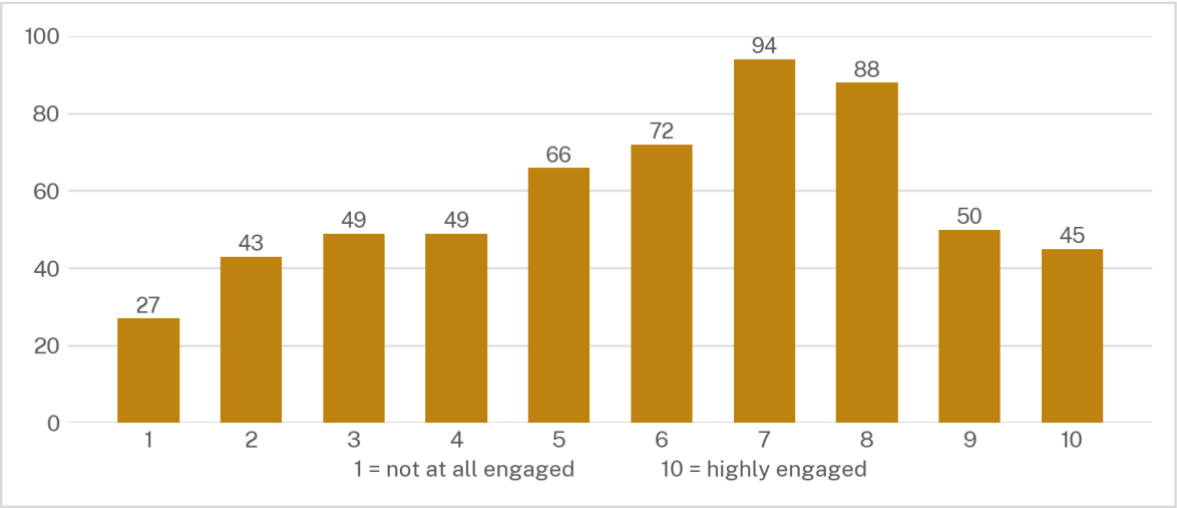
619 respondents made 1,835 selections.

During the past 12 months, which of the following organisations/services have you engaged with?



New question in 2026. 547 respondents selected at least one option; respondents could select multiple options.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how engaged are you with student/campus life?



New question in 2026. 583 respondents; mean 6.0, median 6.

Engagement was noticeably higher among students living on campus. Domestic and international students living on campus averaged 7.1, compared with 5.7 for international students and 5.2 for domestic students living off campus. This aligns with open-text comments from off-campus, online and remote students who find it harder to benefit from SSAF-funded activities.

Please share ideas or comments on how your SSAF should be used

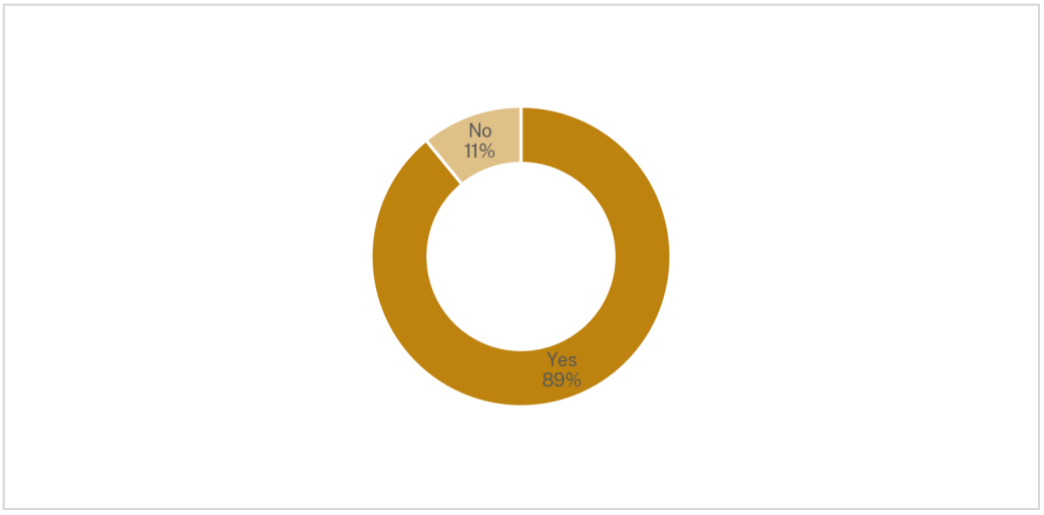
248 respondents provided free text feedback on the use of SSAF (127 in 2025). The individual comments have been consolidated into the themes below, sorted by the number of comments that raised each theme. Some respondents were not specific with ideas or comments, and these have not been included.

Frequency	Feedback theme
42	Continued and increased funding for clubs and societies, including raising club funding caps and supporting student teams and inter-varsity competition
40	Improving access to health and wellbeing services, particularly appointment availability at the ANU Medical Centre, counselling and mental health support
37	More large, inclusive social events and community building beyond O-Week, including events for postgraduate students and mid-year starters
36	Support for keeping SSAF in student-run organisations such as ANUSA and its autonomous departments ("student money in student hands")
36	Support with cost-of-living pressures, including financial hardship grants, subsidies, and free legal and tax services
35	Improving access to free or affordable food and food relief, including the Pantry and free breakfast programs, with requests for healthier options and wider access
23	Better support for students with disability and for specific cohorts, including international, postgraduate, carer, regional and rural, and low-SES students
22	Mixed views on student media: some comments strongly supported Woroni or ANU Observer (7), while more questioned funding two student media organisations (15)
21	Sport and recreation: support for subsidised sport and gym access, alongside criticism of ANU Sport participation costs despite students paying SSAF
19	Strong support for Inward Bound and for residential and non-residential hall communities
19	Objections to SSAF supporting political causes, protests or affiliations, and calls for greater oversight of student organisations
16	Campus facilities and amenities, such as study spaces, furniture, printers, lighting, microwaves, parking and transport
14	More career support and networking opportunities, including for international students and graduates
13	Requests for the fee to be reduced, made optional or refunded
12	Academic and study skills support outside formal coursework, such as writing programs, library services and drop-in sessions
9	Greater consideration of online, remote and off-campus students, who feel they pay the fee but receive limited benefit
6	Greater transparency about how SSAF is spent, and better promotion of existing services that students do not know about
4	More affordable and safe student accommodation
1	Initiatives to prevent and respond to gender-based violence and sexual harm, particularly in residences

A single comment may raise more than one theme, so frequencies add to more than 248.

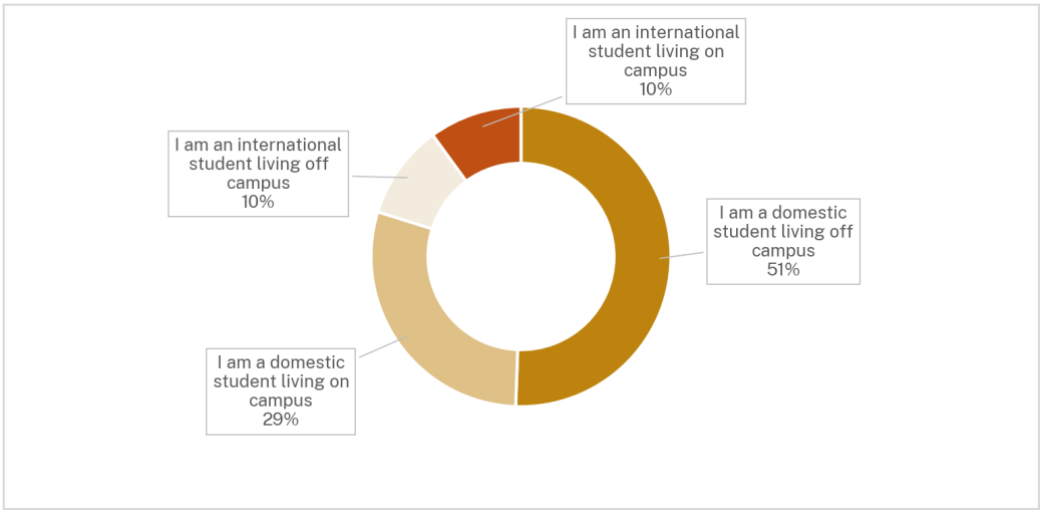
Compared with 2025, when financial aid was the most common theme, 2026 comments placed more emphasis on clubs, health and wellbeing, and social events, while cost-of-living support and food remained prominent. Views on ANUSA and student media continued to be divided, and concern about politically focused activity was raised again, more often than in 2025.

Do you value being able to participate in services and activities that SSAF money funds?



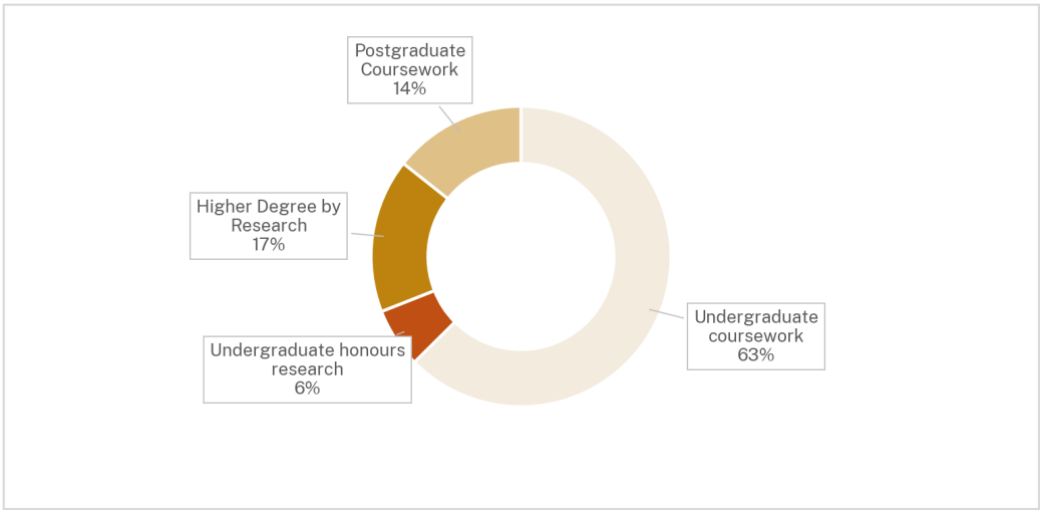
614 respondents (84% answered yes in 2025). By degree type, the proportion answering yes ranged from 84% (Higher Degree by Research) to 91% (undergraduate coursework).

Please let us know which category best describes you for Semester 1, 2027



619 respondents. In 2025: domestic off campus 59%, domestic on campus 23%, international on campus 10%, international off campus 8%.

Please let us know what type of degree you are studying towards with the ANU



620 respondents. In 2025: undergraduate coursework 60%, Higher Degree by Research 19%, postgraduate coursework 17%, undergraduate honours research 4%.

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