

Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) 2025 Report



SSAF Report 2025

'Deakin has always been ahead of the curve. We have a proud history of innovation in education and research, made possible by the people, ideas and events of our 50-year history.

We have marked our 50-year milestone as one of Australia's leading teaching and learning institutes, celebrating the success of our students, teaching and learning staff, researchers and alumni. For half a century we have dedicated our collective efforts to ensure student success, and will continue to deliver for both our local and global communities.

We continue to celebrate as students share their experience and satisfaction of Deakin, demonstrated through the 15 continuous years ranked number one for student course satisfaction in Victoria, number one university for graduate employment and number one for student support.

Supporting our students to thrive and navigate the global landscape has been our true north. We have invested in proven study support initiatives and increased our focus on food security, peer support and wellbeing facilities as we continue to deliver on our promise of providing world standard education and essential work-place skills.

Beyond 2025 we have the task to adapt to the changing Australian higher education landscape, but this is a change that we prepared to meet and I feel are ready for. Deakin University, where Together we can achieve great things.'

Vice-Chancellor

2025 Highlights

- Focus on food security, sustainability and skill development
- Continuation of free sanitary products for all students at all campus libraries and DUSA
- Continued increase in engagement with Orientation and Campus based events
- Significant increase in use of Studiosity+, 24/7 online writing feedback and tutoring
- Sustainable, paid employment opportunities for our students partnering with Industry professionals
- Increased engagement across sporting clubs and societies.

2025 Funding Priorities

- Student mental health and wellbeing
- Student orientation and engagement
- Student careers and employment
- Sport and recreation
- Student peer support and mentoring.

Income and Expenditure

Here are some of the ways your SSAF has enhanced student life in 2025.

ITEM	USE OF FUNDS	SERVICE PROVIDER	2025 FULL YEAR ACTUAL SPEND
1	Direct Advocacy, Welfare, Legal and General Representation	DUSA	\$1,342,384
2	Sporting Programs	DUSA	\$377,614
3	Student Engagement incl. O'Fest	DUSA	\$1,210,689
4	Student Media (by students)	DUSA	\$340,258
5	Administration	DUSA	\$828,859
7	Organisational Governance	DUSA	\$495,196
8	Sport and Recreation (DeakinACTIVE)	Deakin	\$1,205,018
9	Student Engagement	Deakin	\$572,946
10	Student Health and Wellbeing	Deakin	\$527,000
11	DeakinTALENT	Deakin	\$1,264,800
12	Student Academic and Peer Support Services	Deakin	\$1,267,166
13	Deakin Library – Sanitary products	Deakin	\$15,810
14	Student Services Operations	Deakin	\$86,076
A	Total Deakin	Deakin	\$4,938,816
B	Total DUSA	DUSA	\$4,595,000
C	Total expenditure 2025 (A + B)		\$9,533,816
D	2025 actual SSAF income¹		\$9,569,412
E	2024 Carryover into 2025		\$1,124,506
F	2025 Total SSAF available (D + E)		\$10,693,918
G	Deakin residual carryover into 2026² (F – C)		\$1,160,102

1 Forecasting at Outlook 2 in October 2025, estimated student numbers and income to be **\$9,578,550**. This was revised down to the actual amount received at the year-end accrual, which was **\$9,569,412** a reduction of **\$9,138**.

2 Residual carried over into 2026, **\$1,160,102** is a cumulation of proposed budget towards DUSA Burwood refurbishment project (**\$990,000**), and the balance of underspend (**\$170,102**).

Key SSAF outcomes 2025

Deakin University Services and Amenities

► Student Academic and Peer Support Services

SSAF funds allocated to Student Outcomes in the PVC Students Division supports a range of initiatives designed to strengthen students' learning, academic confidence and engagement by means other than undertaking courses of study in which they are enrolled.

These programs include 24/7 online writing feedback and tutoring via Studiosity+, ensuring academic assistance is available beyond standard university hours. Maths and Writing Peer Mentor programs, Peer Assisted Study Support (PASS), and LANTITE preparation sessions are designed to strengthen learning, academic confidence, and engagement through opportunities outside enrolled courses.

These initiatives align strongly with Deakin's Education and Employability priorities by enhancing student experience, supporting student success, and expanding equitable access to services, contributing towards Deakin's focus on enabling diverse learners, fostering student agency and success, and delivering accessible, innovative support across in-person and digital environments.

- **Studiosity+** engagement increased substantially in 2025, with 2,811 more unique students (+167%) and 7,188 additional interactions (+109%) from 2024.
- Across all Studiosity+ users, 83% reported receiving the help they needed, 82% felt more confident, and 92% found the service easy to use. In terms of overall satisfaction, 78.5% of students were extremely satisfied, 33% were somewhat satisfied, and approximately 4% expressed dissatisfaction with the service.
- 76% of Studiosity+ users in 2025 were equity cohort students.

- The **PASS, Maths and Writing Peer Mentors and LANTITE** programs increased in unique student engagement by 32%, while total touchpoints decreased by 8% compared with 2024.
- Equity students represented a substantial proportion of all participants, accounting for 80% of attendees in PASS, 77% in Writing Mentors, 73% in Maths Mentors, and 80% in LANTITE.

► Student Orientation and Engagement

Throughout 2025, Student Engagement and Connection programs were delivered to strengthen students' social and cultural engagement and to support successful transition, orientation, engagement, connection and belonging.

Student Experience Ambassadors, supported through SSAF, played a key role in strengthening confidence, belonging and early academic momentum. Offering extended peer support, and supporting digital orientation, delivered an inclusive experience for a diverse student cohort.

Advice and enrolment support, with high service engagement:

- **Student Central:** almost 60,000 interactions during February–March (S1/T1), nearly 38,150 interactions (T2) and 34,433 interactions (T3).
- Improved student navigation of Orientation via **TargetConnect** replacing the Orientation Itinerary (removing a step for students): 51,555 total logins in S1/T1 (including 38,012 domestic and 13,543 international logins).
- More inclusive and **accessible campus transition options:** low sensory campus tours for students with sensory needs (small group, reduced sensory input), and increased visibility of inclusive and welcoming student spaces (e.g., dedicated OWeek student zone).

Trimester 1

Orientation and engagement experiences are delivered for all students at Deakin. T1 2025 saw 16,155 student enrolments in the commencing cohort (2024:15,198).

Attendance (S1/T1 2025)

Welcome sessions 6,206; Online Introduction Course 4,202; total online attendance 10,488; total on-campus attendance 21,968. New on-campus event types: Course Connections 2,571, and Course Inductions 1,212.

Trimester 2

T2 2025 welcomed 4,934 students and delivered 247 sessions across the Orientation program (112 online sessions/events, 127 on-campus sessions/events, and 8 pre-recorded sessions).

Attendance numbers

33 sessions had more than 100 students in attendance, with the highest being Postgraduate Essentials: Preparing for Post Graduate Studies, with 459 students attending online.

Trimester 3

T3 2025 welcomed 1,315 students and delivered 64 online sessions/events and 36 on-campus sessions/events, with a further 15 pre-recorded sessions.

SSAF also contributed to the delivery and support of the following events and activations:

- Chinese New Year
- **International Student Connect**
- **Respect Week**
- **Mind Matters**
- Pride Week
- IDAHOBIT Day
- **Mental Health Month**
- **RuOk**
- **Respect at Uni Week**

- National Reconciliation Day
- **NAIDOC Week**
- International Student Clinic AFL Clinic
- Wear it Purple Day
- Mid-Autumn Festival
- Social Inclusion Week
- **Summer Program**
- Event resourcing for 22 Student Health Promotion campaigns, events and activities.

► Student Communication and Media

This program delivers student communication content to students across various student communication channels including Deakin Life blog, Student newsletter, New Student Site, Student Website, Student Events, DeakinWELLBEING app, Deakin Life Social media channels, Digital signage, lockscreens, DeakinSync, Starting Out orientation communication and signage across Deakin campuses.

- 2025 **Student newsletter** engagement increased following a similar trend to 2024, 1,435,768 newsletters sent, 560,458 opened (42.7%) a 3% increase, and 37,243 click through (8.03%) up 3.13%.
- **DeakinLife blog:** Views: 377K (332.6K), Visitors: 163.7K (161.1K), Views per visitors: 2.7 (2.6) and Posts: 440 (436) (Figures in brackets indicates 2024 results)
- **Deakin Life Social:**
 - Instagram – 19.8K (18.3K)
Views: 3,604,745, Reach: 65,536, Story clicks: 16,394, Visits: 55,108
 - Tik Tok (First full year) Views: 95,469, Follows: 1757, Reach: 75,089, Clicks: 20,448
- **New Student Site:** 670,411 (46% increase from 314,789 in 2024)

► Mental Health Program and Services

Deakin Mental Health Programs and Services form part of the broader Student Health and Wellbeing Service area supporting international and domestic students. Provision of mental health programs and services specifically aim to promote positive student mental health, and improve retention and academic outcomes. They are provided through preventative, early intervention, and targeted/individualised short-term interventions.

The objectives of expanding Student Mental Health services through SSAF funding are to improve accessibility, provide more timely support for staff supporting students in distress, and to reduce student wait times for counselling. Wait times (to first available appointment) for accessing counselling services have sat within 4–6 days in 2025, improving from a 2-week wait period 2020–2024.

Mental health services are delivered through Counselling and Psychological Support (CAPS) services and Student Wellbeing Liaison (SWL) services.

- Counselling and psychological support services: 39% of the 2,792 (2,720) students supported via 7,232 (8,671) consultations funded through SSAF in 2025. This is a slight increase in overall students supported in 2025, via a reduced number of consultations. 2024 figures shown in brackets.
- Student Wellbeing Liaison consultations: of the total 676 (797), SSAF funded 72 (84) consultations with students.

► Graduate Employment

Embedded Career Education in SEBE

SSAF funding facilitated implementing career education in courses that currently have low employment outcomes as measured by the Graduate Outcome Survey (GOS).

In 2025, the School of Life and Environmental Sciences and the School of IT continued developing career education content, assessments, and supporting resources.

Career Education Development within the Curriculum supported the following students in 2025 with SSAF-funded activities:

- Life and Environmental Science students: 2,615
- School of Information Technology students: 2,000
- Total students in 2025: 4,615 (2024: 4,101; 2023: 4,277; 2022: 2,237)

Industry career mentoring

Career Mentoring provides students who have recently graduated or are in their final trimester of study with industry mentoring, which includes professional development, networking, and assistance with job applications.

In early 2025, a formal review of the program was conducted. 11 students were supported through the review period (41 students in the regular program in 2023 and 2024). Two students secured internships or admission to the DeakinTALENT talent pool for future graduate roles. The review's outcomes recognised significant overlap with other programs and low demand. As a result, career mentoring was discontinued in mid-2025.

Paid freelancing (short-term) roles

Students are given the opportunity to undertake paid short-term roles, build valuable experience, develop their professional skills, manage clients, and access broader professional development opportunities. 21 student roles have been filled in 2025 (21 in 2024, 34 in 2023) for paid stepping stone positions. A diverse range of students were selected for the roles, with a mix of genders, courses, and backgrounds. Students are supported by industry project managers.

► Sport and Recreation Programs

Sport and Recreation programming underpins multiple university functions; recreational facilities, the Elite Athlete Program, sport research, teaching and learning, DUSA sport clubs, the Deakin Sport Network, and student engagement initiatives. It also supports sport marketing partnerships and delivers work integrated learning opportunities that enhance graduate employability.

DeakinACTIVE, sporting facilities and the Elite Athlete Program receive direct SSAF funding with DUSA sport clubs also supported through SSAF within the DUSA component.

DeakinACTIVE provides high quality facilities to support healthy lifestyles, enhance wellbeing, and deliver positive social outcomes for students, staff, and the community. DeakinACTIVE provides fitness centres at each Victorian campus, offering accessible equipment, fitness consultations, tailored programs, group fitness classes, and a suite of online exercise and meditation options.

Following a process of review, the DeakinACTIVE service model was re-established as a Deakin-delivered service. Focused on supporting both structured sport and recreational participation across multiple disciplines, and to maximise student and club access to a diverse range of indoor and outdoor sporting facilities.

- Fitness Centre memberships: Peak total student members 1,683 based on 80% of total members (12% increase from 2024)
- Fitness Centre attendance: 62,641 (5% increase from 2024)
- Group fitness attendance: 9,410 student attendances (6% increase from 2024)
- Sport Facility attendance: 62,641 student attendances. (2% increase from 2024)
- Personal training attendance: 512 student sessions. (6% increase from 2024)
- Work Integrated Learning placements: 15 students. Equal to 2024 placements.
- Free Play Friday: 1,600 student attendances. New initiative in 2025
- 305 members in the Elite Athlete Program (+25)



DUSA Services and Amenities

► Advocacy Service Provision

In 2025, DUSA Advocacy supported 2,960 student cases, representing a moderate decrease from the 3,080 cases recorded in 2024. While total case numbers declined slightly, the complexity of matters and demand for advocacy support remained high throughout the year.

Academic Integrity continued to be the most significant area of casework, with 1,311 cases supported during the year. Although this reflects a small reduction from 2024, academic integrity matters continued to account for a substantial proportion of student enquiries. Most students sought assistance after receiving a formal allegation, often requiring support to understand the nature of the allegation, assess evidence, and determine if they would like to request a review. A smaller cohort of students sought post outcome advice, including guidance on appeal options and the potential impact of outcomes on progression, placements, or visa status.

A notable shift was observed in the type of academic integrity breaches presented by students. For several preceding years, contract cheating had been the most common allegation type. In contrast, 2025 saw an emergence of falsification allegations as the leading allegation. These matters were frequently linked to the use of artificial intelligence, particularly where students relied on AI tools to generate references or failed to verify the accuracy and validity of sources prior to assessment submission.

Importantly, the team observed a subsequent decrease in falsification allegations as assessment of these matters evolved. Where false or inaccurate references were determined to constitute poor academic practice rather than deliberate misconduct, and where relevant criteria were met, students were managed through early intervention pathways.

This approach contributed to a reduction in formal allegations supported by the service.

Case by Faculty

FACULTY	CASES
Arts and Education	440
Business and Law	724
Health	1041
Science, Engineering and Built Environment	739
Deakin College ¹	14
Non-Students and Staff	1

1 Students are referred to Deakin College to access support.

► DUSA Sporting Clubs

DUSA Sporting Clubs remained a core pillar of student sport participation in 2025, providing regular opportunities for connection, belonging and ongoing engagement beyond one-off activations.

Across 2025, 1,716 students were supported through 16 DUSA Sporting Clubs, with clubs offering a broad range of experiences including weekly sporting sessions, social activities, and participation in competitions and tournaments. Through this structure, clubs continued to provide an important foundation for students to build community, develop leadership capability and engage more deeply in student life.

A key area of focus in 2025 was development of student leadership opportunities through sport. Sports Ambassadors contributed to supporting program opportunities across the year, helping strengthen student visibility of DUSA Sport initiatives and providing an additional peer-led mechanism to support engagement activities.

Club structures also continued to create meaningful leadership pathways through committee roles and broader involvement in the delivery of student sport. Further strengthening this development focus, 4 club executives were selected to participate in the inaugural Whitehorse Women in Sport Leadership Program, providing a valuable opportunity for student leaders to build skills, confidence and networks through a recognised external initiative.

Community partnerships also played an important role in broadening participation pathways and extending the reach of sporting opportunities available to students. In 2025, DUSA worked with 13 community partner clubs to support come and try events and create transition points into ongoing competitive sport, particularly for regional and international students seeking connection and local sporting opportunities.

► Orientation Events

Orientation remained a major area of Student Engagement delivery in 2025 and continued to function as a critical entry point for student connection, transition and awareness of DUSA services. DUSA delivered 52 orientation events across the year spanning online information sessions, online social events, located activations and ticketed experiences. These activities generated approximately 3,630 registrations and more than 33,000 attendances across the three trimesters, up over 15% in attendances on 2024, demonstrating the scale of the program and its continued importance within the student experience.

Trimester 1 remained the largest orientation period, with 30 events delivered and 22,494 attendances recorded. Market Day and other located activations drove the strongest participation, supported by ticketed social events and online sessions that helped students connect both on campus and remotely.

Trimester 2 also performed strongly, with 18 events and 9,624 attendances, while Trimester 3 provided a smaller but still valuable welcome program targeted to later commencing students, with around 894 attendances recorded across on-campus and online delivery. This demonstrates the service's continued commitment to maintaining a year-round orientation approach.

The 2025 orientation program adapted event formats in response to student needs and participation trends. Trimester 2 O'Fest was reported as having stronger than expected attendance and engagement, with Market Days and Beats and Eats attracting more than 9,000 estimated attendees across four campuses. Additional event formats such as Mixer and Trivia nights in Burwood and Geelong, Movie Night, and online activities including Deakin Uni Quest, General Trivia, Mature Age Mix and Mingle, and Where in the World trivia with DUSA broadened the offer and created more accessible entry points for different student groups. The Mature Age Mix and Mingle emerged as a strong performer in terms of student feedback and repeat interest.

Orientation delivery also continued to demonstrate the value of collaboration. Medical Orientation at Waurin Ponds included 28 stalls from clubs, partners and DUSA services, while Trimester 3 included a welcome event at Burwood with approximately 400 students and 36 clubs in attendance, alongside faculty welcome day engagement in Geelong.

Orientation activities combined visibility, practical information, social connection and student-facing energy in a way that helped students come across DUSA early, and repeatedly, throughout their transition into university life.

► DUSA Clubs and Societies

DUSA Clubs and Societies continued to represent one of the most significant and sustained forms of student engagement in 2025, providing students with opportunities for belonging, leadership, cultural expression, professional development and peer connection across the year.

By the end of 2025, the service supported 115 clubs and 10,506 active club members, reflecting continued growth across the Deakin community, and a year-on-year increase of 5% from 2024. This growth reinforced the ongoing importance of clubs as a core mechanism for student connection and community-building across campuses.

Clubs continued to deliver a diverse and high-impact program of student-led activity throughout the year. Events highlighted across 2025 included career and networking events, cultural celebrations, fundraising initiatives, academic and professional development activities, creative showcases, outdoor experiences, large-scale collaborative social events and an international trip.

Support for club leaders remained an integral part of the service. Club Executive Training in February attracted 291 attendees, followed by networking opportunities and ongoing support throughout the year in relation to governance, grievances, behavioural matters, event planning and risk management. Annual General Meeting training was also delivered to support clubs through leadership transition and compliance processes, while Club Celebration Night provided an important opportunity to recognise the contribution of student executives across the year.

A significant development in 2025 was the rollout of SENPRO, a new software platform designed to support club administration and improve operational processes, such as event approvals, grants, reimbursements, room bookings and supplier payments. This investment aims to strengthen the support infrastructure around DUSA Clubs and Societies and improving the overall experience for club executives. The results of this implementation will be recognised in 2026.

There was also a strong interest in new club development and continued student club-based engagement. This reinforces the value of the Clubs and Societies 22 programs as a central pillar of the broader Student Engagement portfolio facilitating pathways for student leadership, participation and belonging.

YEAR	# OF CLUBS	# OF MEMBERS
2025	115	10,506
2024	110	9,991
2023	86	9,001
2022	85	8,251
2021	113	8,974
2020	130	10,736

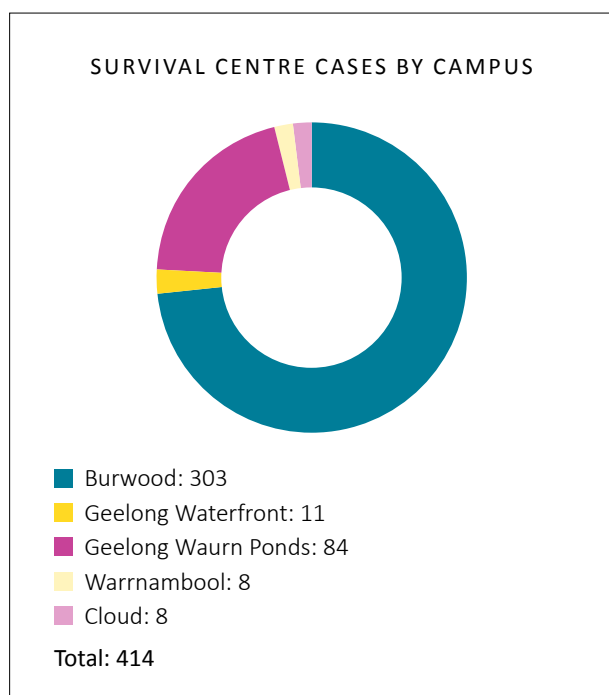


► Survival Centre

Since 2015, DUSA has operated the Survival Centre as a critical support service for students experiencing financial hardship, providing access to essential food, hygiene products and emergency supplies. In 2025, the service continued to evolve in response to increasing demand, changing student needs, and cost-of-living pressures.

Service demand remained high throughout 2025, with a total of 414 recorded cases. While this represents a decrease compared to 595 cases in 2024, demand remains high compared with 329 cases in 2023, reinforcing student financial hardship continues to persist at heightened levels.

Of the 2025 cases, 278 instances related to students accessing the Survival Centre, while a further 136 enquiries were recorded from students who completed the intake process but did not attend. As observed in 2024, these non-attendance cases likely reflect a range of factors, including students not engaging with follow-up communications, changes in personal circumstances, or available appointment times not aligning with student availability.



Collaboration with community organisation, Pinchapoo addressed hygiene poverty through the provision of customised, culturally appropriate and gender-inclusive hygiene packs at no cost to students. Through corporate partnerships, DUSA also secured in-kind support including period products from Love Luna, reducing expenditure in this area, as well as safe sex products from community organisations.

The ongoing partnership with Foodbank remained central to service delivery, with an increased frequency of collections from the Dandenong warehouse ensuring a consistent and diverse supply of shelf-stable food items.

2025 saw a shift toward the quality and usability of items provided, in contrast to 2024, where the focus was on maintaining sufficient stock levels and equitable distribution. This resulted in an increased focus on ready-made and easily prepared food options. A partnership with community philanthropist Simon Wheelton enabled the introduction of frozen meals supplied by FareShare. DUSA also developed simple recipes using commonly available Survival Centre items, supporting students to prepare nutritious, low-cost meals and maximise available resources.

Shop Smart, Cook Smart

In November 2025, DUSA piloted a Shop Smart, Cook Smart program with the City of Whitehorse to address student food insecurity and build practical food literacy. The one-day trial tested skills-based budgeting, shopping, and cooking on a limited budget. The pilot achieved its key outcomes: improved cooking confidence, low-cost and sustainable food practices, reduced food waste, and increased engagement.

Following the success of this pilot program, in Trimester 2, 2026, DUSA will partner with Deakin's School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences to embed the program into student learning with Master of Dietetics (HSN745) students to design, implement, and evaluate a refined cooking program to support sustainable on-campus delivery.

Several service improvements have also been identified for 2026:

- Options for name change for the Survival Centre to better reflect student perceptions and reduce stigma. Student insights will be gathered through the annual DUSA Survey
- Review of the current service model to explore open-access approaches that reduce barriers to entry
- Revise intake form to align with student-centred language used across promotional materials and website

► DUSA Scholarship

Since its establishment in 2013, the DUSA Scholarship Program has continued to play a critical role in supporting students experiencing financial hardship, recognising the direct impact that economic pressures can have on academic success, participation and overall wellbeing.

In 2025, the program was supported through income generated via DUSA's corporate partnerships, enabling the delivery of Domestic Student Success Scholarships. Each scholarship package was designed to alleviate immediate financial pressures while supporting ongoing academic engagement. Recipients were provided with a comprehensive support package, including a DUSA Gold membership, a laptop, and financial assistance to contribute towards essential study-related expenses.

The 2025 scholarship round saw strong demand across all campuses and study modes, reflecting the continued financial challenges faced by students. A total of 199 applications were received, Burwood (54), Waurm Ponds (75), Waterfront (30), Warrnambool (6), and Online (34). 146 applicants identified financial hardship as a primary factor impacting their studies.

Applications were assessed through a structured selection process, with shortlisted candidates reviewed by a panel comprising of the Advocacy Manager and the DUSA Vice Presidents. Consideration was given to financial need, and also to the extent to which the scholarship would enable recipients to continue and succeed in their studies. A total of 11 scholarships were awarded to students at the commencement of Trimester 1, 2025.

The impact of the scholarships was significant. Recipients reported reduced financial stress, improved capacity to engage in their studies, and an increased sense of confidence and belonging within the university community. The provision of essential resources, particularly technology and financial assistance, enabled students to focus more fully on their academic goals without the ongoing burden of financial uncertainty.

Recipient feedback received at the end of Trimester 1 further highlights the value of the program:

'Receiving this scholarship has taken an enormous weight off my shoulders. It has allowed me to focus on my studies rather than constantly worrying about how I will afford basic essentials. It has truly changed my university experience.'

– Waurm Ponds student

'The support I've received goes far beyond financial assistance. It has given me the confidence to continue pursuing my degree, knowing that there are people who believe in my potential and want to see me succeed.'

– Online student

'This scholarship has made a real difference in my day-to-day life. Having access to a reliable laptop and financial support means I can fully participate in my course, and plan for the future with greater certainty.'

– Burwood student

► Food Pantry

In 2025, DUSA delivered Food Pantry services across all Deakin campuses, providing essential food support to students regardless of their food security status. The Food Pantry continued to address cost-of-living pressures by offering fresh produce and shelf-stable items in a welcoming, low-barrier environment, while also supporting student wellbeing and connection to broader support services.

A total of 42 Food Pantry events were delivered, with access managed through online pre-registration and on-the-day check-in to ensure accurate reporting of service reach. 2,951 unique students accessed the Food Pantry throughout the year, accounting for 7,089 visits, with students attending an average of 2.4 times. Consistent with previous years, international students comprised most users (84%), with domestic students making up 14% and a further 2% not disclosing their student status, underscoring the disproportionate financial vulnerability experienced by international students.

Demand remained strong across all campuses, with Burwood recording 4,117 visits, followed by Waurin Ponds 1,828, Waterfront 877, and Warrnambool 267. Warrnambool continued to show steady growth in attendance, indicating increasing awareness and accessibility of the service at the regional campus.

Usage across trimesters remained relatively stable, with 3,174 visits in Trimester 1 and 3,065 visits in Trimester 2. While Trimester 2 attendance was slightly lower than the previous year, this was offset by an expanded Trimester 3 offering, where four Pantry events were delivered, resulting in 850 visits and significantly higher engagement than in Trimester 3 of 2024.

► Free Breakfast

DUSA delivered Free Breakfast activations across all campuses in Trimesters 1 and 2, recording 6,378 student attendances:

- Burwood: 2,675 students (-46%)
- Waurin Ponds: 2,697 students (-25%)
- Waterfront: 845 students (-22%)
- Warrnambool: 161 students (+53%)

Several interrelated factors contributed to lower participation. The program's physical location limited walk-in traffic and visibility on the Burwood campus, reducing spontaneous engagement. Promotion was intentionally moderated to manage resource constraints, which supported sustainability but likely reduced awareness among new students and restrictions on food items also created perceived barriers to participation.

Beyond operational factors, behavioural and external influences played a role. An observed proportion of students routinely skip breakfast, trials of alternative food options showed mixed results, and rising cost of living and transport expenses reduced campus foot traffic overall.

Positive developments:

In Trimester 2, themed ad-hoc Free Breakfast events invited external services, including Good Shepherd and Deakin International Student Support, to connect directly with students. The addition of games and music created a more welcoming environment, encouraging longer stays and meaningful engagement with peers and service providers.

► Financial Wellbeing

The DUSA Financial Wellbeing Team is committed to strengthening students' financial literacy, capability, and resilience, with the overarching aim of minimising the impact of financial stress on academic participation and success.

The service delivers a broad range of supports, including financial information and education, budgeting assistance, referral pathways, advocacy, income-maximisation strategies, and targeted material support for students experiencing financial hardship. Service awareness is promoted through established engagement points such as Free Breakfasts, the Food Pantry, and the Survival Centre, alongside the use of DUSA's social media platforms and the DUSA site on Cloud Deakin to maximise reach and accessibility.

Throughout 2025, demand for financial wellbeing support increased significantly. A total of 240 students accessed the service, representing a 44 per cent increase compared to 2024. International students comprised a substantial proportion of service users, accounting for 51% of students supported.

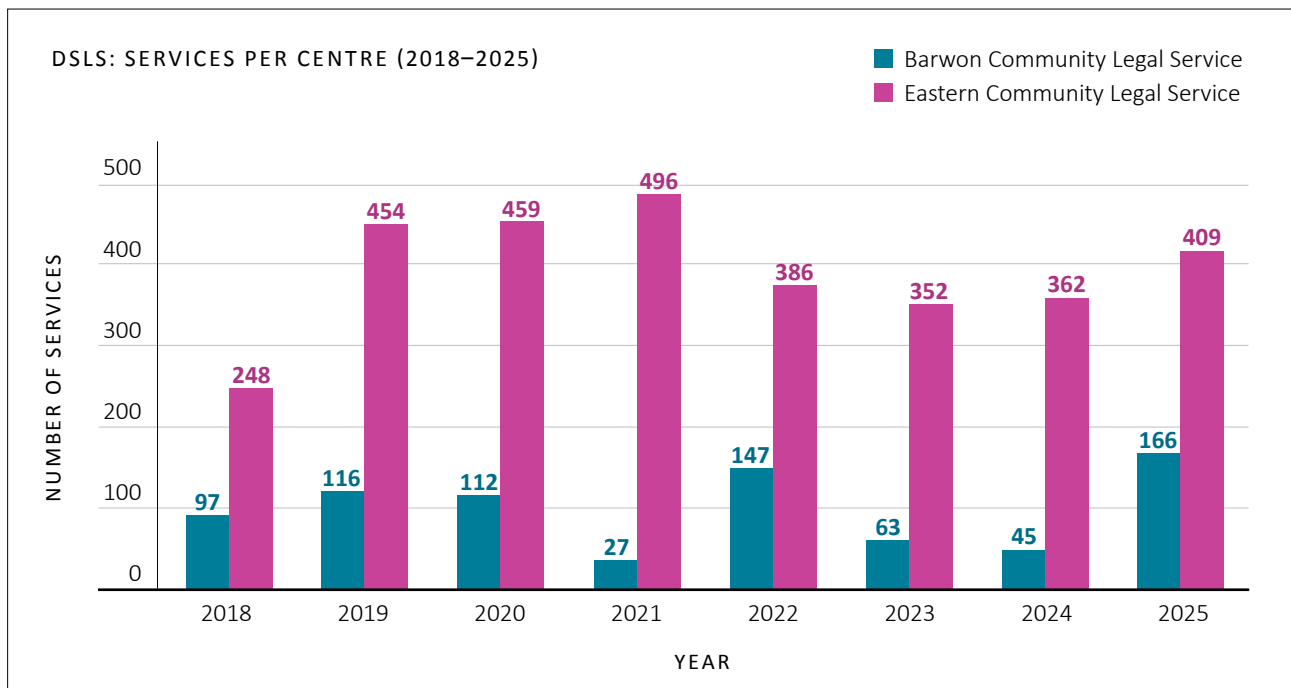
► Legal Advice

Deakin Student Legal Service (DSLS) continued to prioritise student needs by offering flexible service delivery, including face-to-face appointments, video conferencing, and phone consultations. The DSLS team also worked collaboratively to maximise resources for the benefit of all students.

Recorded online webinars allowed students to access information sessions at a time that suited them, reducing the impact of timetable clashes and other commitments.

In collaboration with DUSA and Deakin University staff, DSLS continued to have a regular and active presence at student events across campuses throughout the year, to raise awareness of the service and engage in preventative legal education for students, and to avoid potential legal issues before they occur.

The team are involved in O'Fest and International Student Welcomes, and the 'Know Your Rights' sessions have also become a regular calendar fixture each trimester. There were nine information sessions presented across the year, with a total of 178 students registering and 51 students attending live, representing a 29% attendance rate.



Contact us

For further information, please visit the Deakin website at deakin.edu.au.

Email: respectbelongthrive@deakin.edu.au

Deakin University
221 Burwood Highway
Burwood VIC 3125
Australia

deakin.edu.au

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