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## 2023 Excellence Awards Student



*Recognises and celebrates individuals and teams who engage, inspire, motivate, and have made an outstanding and significant contribution to delivering excellence in service to our students or connecting them with the knowledge and wisdom to shape the world.*

### Students Winners:

#### 1. Melanie Rumball (CSU Chancellor and Council)

***What the nomination was for:***

Melanie Rumball continues to lead a constructive, student-centred complaints process that exemplifies the University's commitment to embedding a culture of excellence and continuous improvement. Melanie's recent achievements include:

- Improved accessibility of the complaints process.
- Acknowledged all student complaints for 2022-2023 within 1 business day, ensuring that students feel that their concerns are taken seriously.
- Resolved formal complaints for 2022- 2023 within 10 business days.
- Implemented an effective complaints management program leading to the identification of opportunities for continuous improvement across multiple areas of the University's operations.
- Provided advice to over 400 students and 75 staff in 2022-2023 to support early resolutions, and therefore, improved student experience.
- Developed and delivered complaints management training to staff to ensure students have a fair and positive experience when making complaints.
- Improved avenues for informal complaints, making it easier for students to provide feedback and for the University to improve service delivery and student experience.

***Why it is Excellence Award worthy:***

Melanie's efforts and achievements have transformed the University's complaints management program into a student-centred program that seeks to find fair resolutions to complaints and uses feedback to inform continuous improvement across all aspects of our operations.

For individual students, who typically contact Melanie at the most difficult points of their University experience, Melanie's approach exemplifies our ethos and truly makes a difference, as is evidenced by positive student feedback.

For the University community more broadly, Melanie's work demonstrates our values of being insightful, inclusive, impactful, and inspiring, and supports our collective effort to create a student-centred culture of excellence.

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## 2. Community Mental Health Experience (CMHE) Program (Three Rivers Department of Rural Health)

Names: Chris Howard (Team Lead), Tamiki Morrow, Chloe Foster, Maddison Gillette, Tracey Parkes, Latitia Kernaghan, Elyce Green, Claire Seaman

### ***What the nomination was for:***

This nomination is for enhancement of student learning about mental health practice through the creation of the Community Mental Health Experience (CMHE) program. This program is targeted at increasing students' confidence, capability, and interest in working in mental health practice. It was designed in response to the growing need for graduates to be equipped with mental health knowledge so they can thrive in contemporary rural health environments. The CMHE is a partnership between Charles Sturt and LikeMinds and involves a bespoke mental health work-integrated learning experience for social work, paramedicine, and nursing students. Importantly, the program has an embedded evaluation framework that provides students the opportunity to give feedback on their learning experience so that the experience is relevant and high-quality. The program has been continuously modified in response to student feedback such as changing student: supervisor ratios, inviting guest speakers from specialty mental health backgrounds, and modifying student-led mental health activities with consumers.

### ***Why it is Excellence Award worthy:***

The community mental health placement experience demonstrates the outcomes that can be derived from a willingness to try something new, and also to be respectful and responsive to student feedback. The program aligns with Charles Sturt's values of innovation (in pushing traditional boundaries for mental health learning), and inspiring (in challenging stereotypes about mental health practice and careers). Responsiveness to student feedback also demonstrates inclusivity, and models education that is collaborative. Other notable achievements of the program include:

- 178 placement weeks hosted for nursing, paramedicine, and social work students
- Pre-post student surveys show an increase from 78% to 89% in confidence working with people who have a lived experience of mental illness and 68% to 84% increase in confidence delivering information about mental health to consumers
- Student feedback that demonstrates the impact of the program on their learning, for example "After completing this placement and reflecting back on my experiences, I feel like the experience has exceeded my expectations. The knowledge that I have been exposed to and developed, as well as the people I have been privileged to meet and the services I have been introduced to, have been incredibly beneficial and will help to shape my future practice as a paramedic".

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## 3. Division of Student Experience and Office of Planning and Analytics

Names: Jeff Roffe Team Lead), Simon Eriksson, Allison Schirmer, Alannah Huntly, Nicole Rogers, Angela Waldron, Gina Davis, Kyle Bryant, Sandra Sharpham

### ***What the nomination was for:***

During 2023, the Department of Education notified Universities that due to a systemic issue, the Tax File Numbers of former and current students had not been committed and therefore debts had not been applied to the student at the ATO. Across the sector, debts ranged from \$50,000 to \$7m, with Charles Sturt University receiving an uncommitted figure at just over \$1m.

With a tight deadline to meet due to ATO indexing, a team was pulled together from members of Student Administration and the Office of Planning and Analytics to work through the remediation process and provide feedback to the Department of Education on some of the technical impacts that led to the issue at hand.

Whilst keeping students at the centre of the process, the team managed to remediate approximately 95% of the debt for the University. Furthermore, due to the diligence of the team in investigating and reporting technical issues that were impacting our ability to commit the debts and their strong negotiating with the Department of Education, the result is that the University does not have any outstanding liability. This was not a standard result across the rest of the sector, where many institutions simply paid outstanding amounts at the end of July this year.

approached balancing our requirements under the relevant legislation with the experience of the students, both current and former. The team had to navigate many challenges, including impacted students with serious illnesses as well as being cognisant of the recent media scrutiny over other debt remediation programs and the associated potential reputational risks for the University.

Additionally, alongside the case management focus on the remediation, the team diligently investigated the root cause of the issue within the TCSI reporting system. This involved complex data interrogation and stakeholder management with the Department of Education. The team's due diligence meant we were able to negotiate the University receiving a \$1m debt and successfully negotiate for any remaining unresolved liability to be waived.

The way in which the team conducted themselves during the process exemplified a student-first approach to resolving a complex administrative and compliance-driven task. An outstanding job by all involved.

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#### 4. Accommodation Scholarships Team (Various Areas)

Names: Michael Buttsworth (Team Lead), Travis Cohalan, Kate Giles, Stefania Graham, Nina Clemson, Erin Wise, Gabriella Dunshea, Sandra Sharpham

##### ***What the nomination was for:***

First year accommodation scholarships were introduced in 2022 as key tactic to support new student enrolments in 2023. The domestic student acquisition landscape was highly competitive, increased by the government offering additional places for equity students. Charles Sturt University provisioned was granted 1000 of these places and the requirement to meet cap for funding.

It was proposed to introduce \$3m of scholarships for first year accommodation on our regional campuses. The scholarships were designed to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds (rural, regional, remote, low SES, first in family, First Nations, disability) to realise their aspirations by having their first year of on campus accommodation paid for. This would also help the university to realise our commencing load goals, reach cap and increase our students living and studying on campus. A strategic submission for funding was made to ELT, the funding granted, a data matrix built, and a tactical team stood up within the space of a week to connect prospects to the scholarship opportunity and make this initiative a reality.

##### ***Why it is Excellence Award worthy:***

This work exemplifies the tenacity of our student-focused teams, who powered by our organisational values, saw an opportunity to bring our strategy to life and create more opportunities for higher education for some of our most disadvantaged students. It also demonstrates the power of working across the organisation to make things happen quickly.

The team was assembled within a week and in two months had awarded \$3m in accommodation scholarships. They took a human-centred approach and overcame system and structural challenges.

Our student calling team made over 4000 calls to eligible students, having rewarding conversations and receiving feedback like "this will really help", "is this for real" and "I wouldn't have had anywhere to live if I didn't get this". Our scholarships and residence life teams then stepped up to overcome the administrative burdens and ensure students received their accommodation. Analysis from OPA has shown that the initiative was instrumental in the University being projected to meet cap in 2023 and increasing our on-campus school leaver cohort, with converted enrolments in total increasing by 9% year on year.

More than 300 students benefited from the scholarships, resulting in a direct first year enrolment benefit of \$5.3m. Our residences saw an uplift of more than 30% for new students taking up accommodation at our campuses, while the progress rates for our first year on-campus students with scholarships is 2% higher than those without and they are also taking ~10% more study load.

This initiative has been extremely successful for our students, our staff and our university in realising strategic goals, leading with our values and bringing our vision as Australia's leading regional university to life.

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#### 5. Free Food Initiative (Division of Library Services)

**What the nomination was for:**

I'm honoured to nominate staff for their exceptional efforts in establishing the Free Food Initiative, showcasing their commitment to student welfare. This initiative was born an obvious need to address the pressing issue of food insecurity among our diverse regional student body. The dedication of the team ensured a budget was secured and a food selection accommodating various dietary needs was established across and 6 main campus libraries as well as Goulburn. Through extensive collaboration across campuses, they've ensured a range of food options is available for students.

Their work in raising awareness and organizing food distribution has provided a lifeline for those facing food insecurity and affordability challenges. Regular feedback and data collection has driven continuous improvements, with undeniable positive impacts on academic success and the overall student experience.

**Why it is Excellence Award worthy:**

Direct student feedback provides evidence that the Free Food Program has had an exceptional impact on our university community, addressing not only an immediate need but also the broader goals of academic success and student retention. By providing food, this program has alleviated living pressures and improved students' physical and mental well-being. The positive outcomes are palpable, with reduced financial stress and a sense of community and inclusivity that contributes to a more enriching student experience. Moreover, this initiative reflects Charles Sturts commitment to equity and inclusivity, ensuring that all students have equal access to basic necessities. The Free Food Program exemplifies Charles Sturts dedication to fostering a supportive, nurturing environment that empowers students toward academic excellence.

The following student feedback demonstrates why this initiative is worthy of an award.

"Good idea. Was helpful to get through the intensive where a system of self care may be underdeveloped."

"Thank you for doing this. it makes us feel supported and cared for, especially in times where we need it most."

"Absolutely great to have food and drinks available at the library. It makes for productive study breaks and energy boosts when I need it. Thank you!!"

"This has been a godsend during exam season! Thank you !!!"

"Soooooooo good! Thank you for providing tea and coffee. This has made my studying experience infinitely better."

In recognition of their outstanding dedication in fostering supportive campus environments, I wholeheartedly endorse this nomination. Their exceptional efforts embody empathy and inclusivity, enriching the lives of students across our university community.

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## Highly Commended:

### 1. Andrew McGrath (School of Psychology)

Nominee selected for his exceptional attitude and promptness in assisting students with alternate format materials. His proactive approach reduced university costs, minimised delays for students, and improved the learning experience. His collaboration with the accessibility and inclusion team was outstanding, and he enhanced the subject site by adding captions, benefiting both the specific student and the entire class.

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### 2. Cyber Skills Partnership Innovation Team (Various Areas)

Names: Jason Howarth (team Lead), Mohammad Ali Moni Muhammad Arif Khan, Michael Kemp, Arash Mahboubi, Sabih Rehman, Tanveer Zia, Ashad Kabir, Louis Hourany, Leanne White

Nominees selected due to the team's collaborative effort in creating industry-aligned curriculum under tight deadlines. It has pioneered the concept of integrating specialised subjects within existing degrees, such as Bachelor of Information Technology and Bachelor of Computer Science, tailored for specific industry segments. These micro subjects, combined with generic skills, enable students to access work placements and internships with industry providers. The success of this pilot will facilitate negotiations with other industry partners to develop specialised content, enhancing students' preparation for employment in sectors requiring specific skill sets.

Names: Rebecca Acheson (Team Lead), Danielle Sparrow, Kelly Shaw, Lauren Iffland, Hayley Davis, Tracy Ryan

Nominees selected for significantly improving course quality and supported student learning. The team implemented a mapping module within CDAP, resulting in over 85 mapped courses. This mapping assisted Educational Designers and course leadership in identifying areas for improved student experience. It ensured course alignment with regulatory requirements, informed course reviews, and provided evidence of design quality for committees.

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