

STUDENT VOICE REPORT

20

25



Swinburne Student Association

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MESSAGE FROM SSA LEADERS



As the Board and representatives of the Swinburne Student Association (SSA), our role is to **keep student voice at the centre of decisions about learning, life and opportunity at Swinburne**. In the 2025 Student Forums, students told us what helps, what gets in the way, and where attention might matter most across VE, HE, postgraduate and HDR cohorts.

Our direction is be anchored in **SSA's "Towards 2030" Strategic Plan**, which sets a shared horizon for the years ahead. The 2025 Student Forums focused on four big areas: stronger student representation, safer and healthier communities, meaningful employability pathways, and a campus culture that advances inclusion and sustainability.

This report is a snapshot of where things stand and what students asked for. It pulls together Forum insights into clear themes, with examples, so SSA and Swinburne have a common starting point for action.

Our approach is simple: start with what students tell us, and be honest about what we can deliver. The ideas in this report are intended to spark conversations with students and university leaders, and to highlight practical steps forward. As views evolve, engage more students and host more forums, we'll update this document so it reflects what we are hearing.

Your input shapes the questions we ask and the conversations we continue to host on campus, online, and through other channels. We invite you to stay connected so that future directions remain grounded in lived experience.

“ SSA is the peak student voice, it must be consulted on all student experience issues. ”

SSA staff member

INTRODUCTION

In 2025, SSA brought students together to reflect on the Swinburne experience and where attention might matter most. Two Student Forums and an online survey gave students space to say what helps, what gets in the way, and what they want explored next.

Both forums were independently facilitated to keep the discussion open, practical, and balanced. The first Forum mapped challenges and opportunities across three pillars of student life:

Learning & Teaching

Keeping content, assessment, and support relevant and career-ready

Campus Life

Connection, belonging, and participation beyond the classroom

Wellbeing

Services, culture, and spaces that support mental, physical, and financial health

The second forum, held in August 2025, students built on the first Forum and dove deeper into shared priorities and workshopped examples of what improvements could look like in context.

Across conversations, students asked for curricula and assessments that feel current and applied. They want support that is easy to find and simple to access, wellbeing services that are visible and proactive, campuses equipped with technology and infrastructure.

“Without SSA, there’d be no central hub for support, no community bringing students together.”

Swinburne Student

For students, flexibility, affordability, employability, inclusion, and community are to be treated not as add-ons, but as fundamental parts of the Swinburne experience.

SSA ran its Strategic Plan Survey (July 2025), with 323 participants. The survey reinforced SSA’s role as the central point of student connection, everyday support, and advocacy.

Key survey findings:

- SSA is seen as vital for support, belonging, and representation.
- Students expect SSA to safeguard wellbeing, build community, and amplify student voice.

Together, the Forums and Survey provide a shared evidence base for this report and for SSA’s Towards 2030 Strategic Plan. Across the Forums and the Strategic Survey, students are clear about the role they want SSA to play: to safeguard wellbeing, enrich student experience, build community and amplify their voice. In both, students and staff picture connection, empowerment and inclusion as part of everyday life at Swinburne, not one-off programs.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report is both a snapshot and a guide to what students told us in the 2025, and acts as a guide to where to go next.

How the report was developed

- Two Student Forums were conducted in May 2025 and August 2025,
- Three online Strategic Plan Surveys were conducted during July 2025,
- Supported by independent facilitators to keep the questions and discussion open, practical, and balanced.

How to read the report

- Themes show key recurring ideas that students raised.
- Examples include illustrative possibilities, not prescribed actions.
- Signals - notes and quotes that show why a theme matters.

Our working approach

LISTEN → TEST → REFINE

Six key elements

The ideas and actions identified through both forums have been organised into six key themes, each representing a pillar of the future Swinburne student experience:

1



EMPLOYABILITY
& CAREER
DEVELOPMENT

4



CLUBS, SPORTS
& COMMUNITY

2



TEACHING
LEARNING &
ASSESSMENT

5



EQUITY,
INCLUSION &
INTERNATIONAL
EXPERIENCE

3



STUDENT SUPPORT
& WELLBEING

6



SYSTEM, DATA &
GOVERNANCE

STUDENT INSIGHTS & PRIORITIES

Framing the Student Voice

As part of the 2025 Swinburne Student Forum, participants were invited to:

- rank the issues that matter most to their university experience
- highlight any missing themes
- identify one practical change that would improve student life.

Top-Ranked Priorities

Students were asked to rank eleven key themes in order of importance. The results show a clear consensus: quality of teaching, career readiness, and cost of living lead the way, supported by strong calls for flexibility, infrastructure, and safety.

Rank	Theme	Focus Points	% Preference
1	Employability and Career Development	Work-Integrated Learning, industry links, skill development	92%
2	Quality of Teaching and Learning	Consistency of staff, live classes, fair assessment, clearer rubrics	88%
3	Cost of Living and Financial Support	Affordable food, scholarships, financial flexibility for internationals	88%
4	Accommodation and Transport	Cheaper rent, more on-campus beds, better public transport discounts	88%
5	Mental Health and Wellbeing	Accessible counselling, shorter wait times, therapy animals, proactive support	85%
6	Flexible Study Options and Timetabling	Hybrid options, fewer timetable clashes, better access to staff	81%
7	Campus Infrastructure and Facilities	Study space, microwaves, repair responsiveness, more power outlets	81%

Rank	Theme	Focus Points	% Preference
8	Campus Safety and Inclusivity	Lighting, safe transport, gender-safe spaces, advocacy visibility	77%
9	Digital Learning and Technology Access	Access to relevant software, IT support, hardware upgrades	77%
10	Community, Campus Life and Belonging	More events, SSA visibility, cross-club collaboration	77%
11	Sustainability and Climate Action	Green transport, partnerships with sustainable industries	73%

Nine in ten students ranked employability, teaching quality, and affordability as their top priorities.

Missing or Overlooked Issues

While most students agreed on the top priorities, several participants identified some missing and underrepresented issues that shaped their day-to-day experience:

Campus Life Balance

- Recognition that social connection is central to wellbeing and retention.

Mentorship and One-to-One Support

- Opportunities for personalised academic and career mentoring.

Teaching Staff Continuity

- Consistent staff across semesters to maintain course quality.

Financial Flexibility

- Payment options and support for international students.

Leadership and Engagement

- More structured student leadership and representation roles.

Communication and Responsiveness

- Faster response times from university services, clearer escalation pathways, and greater visibility of who to contact.

“Communication needs to be clearer and quicker between students, staff, and departments.”

Swinburne Student

One Specific Thing to Fix

When asked what single improvement would most enhance their student experience, participants gave grounded, practical answers that reflect everyday challenges. Students repeatedly emphasised visible, immediate fixes that show responsiveness and care.

Theme	Representative Comments
Teaching & Learning	“Consistency of teaching staff”; “Timetabling and engaging lectures”; “More in-person classes, less pre-recorded content”; “Our curriculum should evolve, and teachers should care about student experience.”
Employability	“Have industry experts run workshops”; “Curriculum connected to industry expertise”; “Improved Work Integrated Learning.”
Wellbeing & Support	“Better communication line between staff and students”; “A facilities contact so students can report campus issues”; “Microwaves and sandwich press options on campus.”
Community	“Definitely the campus life, more events and social connection.”
Digital Access	“Access to relevant software and improvement of IT support.”
Equity	“Flexibility for fee payments, especially for international students.”

Emerging Insights

The poll results reinforce the Forum themes:

- Teaching quality remains a primary driver of satisfaction and engagement.
- Wellbeing and cost-of-living pressures are intertwined with academic success.
- Employability relies on both career services and real-world skills embedded in courses.
- Communication gaps remain, pointing to a need for clearer, two-way channels.
- Students want some visible quick fixes as well as long term change.

SSA and Swinburne can use these messages to shape planning for 2026 and beyond.

“

“Students don’t just want to be heard, they want to see things change.”

”

Swinburne Student

KEY THEMES

EMPLOYABILITY & CAREER DEVELOPMENT



Students keep linking their Swinburne experience to what happens after graduation. They want real experience built into their courses, clear steps for building skills, and support that doesn't depend on having top marks or the "right" connections.

What students told us

Work-integrated learning (WIL)

- Embed industry projects directly into units (e.g., Assignment-3 style tasks).
- Make internships short-term (2–3 weeks) and accessible to all students, including those with lower WAM or in non-credit courses.
- Offer placements for student undertaking master's degree and for international students.
- Expand partnerships with local businesses and sustainable companies for WIL.

Internships & industry exposure

- Connect students with employers through expos and recruiter visits on campus.

Practical learning

- Increase practical units, with hands-on and collaborative projects replacing purely passive assessments.
- Encourage "learning by doing" through industry challenges and client briefs.
- Involve industry in curriculum design.

Career readiness initiatives

- SSA or SUT-led career expos that bridge the knowledge gap.
- Mentorship programs pairing students with professionals.
- Support for double majors through flexible term placements (Summer/Winter).

AI and future skills

- Introduce AI literacy modules, ethical AI use and AI as a practical tool in all disciplines.
- Revamp academic integrity modules to include AI competency.

Recognition & quality teaching

- Recognise and reward effective teaching staff who improve employability outcomes.

TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT



When students talk about quality, they mostly mean good teachers, clear expectations and assessments that feel fair and relevant. They're asking for classes that are engaging and up to date, with flexible options that fit around work, caring and life.

What students told us

Quality & consistency

- Consistent teaching staff across semesters, and clearer rubrics aligned to assignment tasks.
- Updated and relevant course content with fewer repetitive topics.
- Better marking systems and fairer late penalties.

Engaging delivery

- Remove reliance on pre-recorded lectures and encourage live, interactive classes.
- Integrate guest lecturers, industry experts, and networking opportunities.
- More "Week in Review" or flowchart-style summaries for quick learning refreshers.

Feedback & support

- Continuous feedback rather than end-of-semester evaluations.
- Strengthen teacher-student connection through improved consultation availability.
- Teachers consulting students before finalising course timelines.

Flexible & hybrid learning

- Option for hybrid class attendance and flexibility between on-campus and online study.
- More Winter and Summer unit offerings to allow catch-up and flexibility.

Digital access & literacy

- Wider range of free licences for required tools.
- Student ID integrated into smartphones or a wallet app for access.
- Free generative AI subscriptions and expanded IT support.
- Staff training in digital tools (Alvie, LMS, AI).

Simplified structures

- Clearer subject guides and attendance expectations.
- Provide course structures to better understand learning pathways.

STUDENT SUPPORT & WELLBEING



Students described wellbeing and support as crucial part of their university experience. They want help that's easy to find, with shorter waits, proactive check-ins and practical support for money, housing and day-to-day pressures.

What students told us

Mental health support

- More counselling sessions with shorter wait times.
- Minimum three wellbeing sessions per semester (optional but strongly encouraged).
- Sessions to include group, 1:1 and online/in-person options covering stress, balance and inclusivity.
- Therapy animals on campus twice a semester.

Financial support & cost of living

- Cheaper food options, frozen meals, vending machines with warm meals, discounted groceries.
- Better promotion of scholarships and hardship funds.

Accommodation & transport

- Increase affordable on-campus accommodation capacity and support finding nearby housing.
- Public transport discounts (Myki concession for students).
- Shuttle bus service during exam season.

Care & accessibility

- On-campus care services (childcare, pet care, wellbeing clinics).
- Support rooms for parents (baby formula, nappies, rest space).

CLUBS, SPORTS & COMMUNITY



Clubs, sport and social events are how many students actually feel part of Swinburne. They're asking for more chances to connect casually, better spaces to hang out, and strong backing for the student-run communities that hold campus life together.

What students told us

SSA integration

- SSA to work closely with clubs (co-plan and support events rather than just oversee).
- Embed SSA staff in cultural and religious event planning.

Community & belonging

- More social events, mixers, and parties to help students connect casually.
- Regular cultural festivals and night events (not just weekday daytime).
- Encouraging respect and representation for all religions and cultures.

Sports & facilities

- More sporting facilities and equipment; support club teams and competitions.
- Encouraging small competitions and on-campus recreational events.

Cross-campus collaboration

- Create connections with other universities for shared events or challenges.
- Enable cross-faculty collaboration within Swinburne.

Spaces & inclusion

- Develop social spaces: pub/café/common room/games area.
- Promote existing spaces (e.g., GS217) for social activities.

Recognition & communication

- Promote clubs via Unit Convenors, Canvas and SSA events.
- Annual SSA club recognition awards.

EQUITY, INCLUSION & INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE



For a lot of students, belonging is about seeing themselves reflected and feeling safe. International students, equity cohorts and under-represented groups want a stronger voice in decisions, more tailored support, and events that respect different cultures, identities and needs.

What students told us

Cultural inclusion

- Break stigma and isolation by hosting cultural/religious awareness events.
- Create committees for religious and cultural clubs to pitch big ideas and receive funding.

Equitable safety

- Women and Queer spaces clearly advertised across campus.
- Night buses, improved lighting and female security staff.
- Danger alert function built into Swinburne app.

International student engagement

- Include international voices in forum design and club leadership.
- Promote inclusive activities across Wantirna, Croydon and Swinburne Online.

Accessibility & wellbeing

- Peer mentoring for students with disabilities or mental health challenges.
- Inclusive design of study and social spaces.

Sustainability as inclusion

- Partner with sustainable industries for WIL opportunities.
- Support community gardens managed by students/staff, improving food access.

Representation

- Ensure SSA and University structures include diverse student voices in decision-making.

SYSTEM, DATA & GOVERNANCE



Students often know exactly what needs fixing, but don't know where to take it or whether it will go anywhere. They want simpler systems, clearer communication, and ways to report issues, track progress and see how their feedback is shaping decisions.

What students told us

Centralised communication & feedback system

- One platform combining key functions currently split across Vygo, the Swinburne app and other tools.
- Space for students to post suggestions, upvote, and discuss improvements.
- Opt-in reminders for SSA and club events.

Reporting & maintenance

- “Snap, Send, Solve” style tool for reporting campus maintenance issues.
- Simple URLs for issue submission and status updates.
- Option to opt in for notifications per building for facility updates.

Facilities management

- Student-facing transparency on who oversees maintenance or safety.

Governance collaboration

- Stronger coordination between SSA, Clubs and SUT Schools.
- Annual review cycles where SSA feedback informs Swinburne service planning.

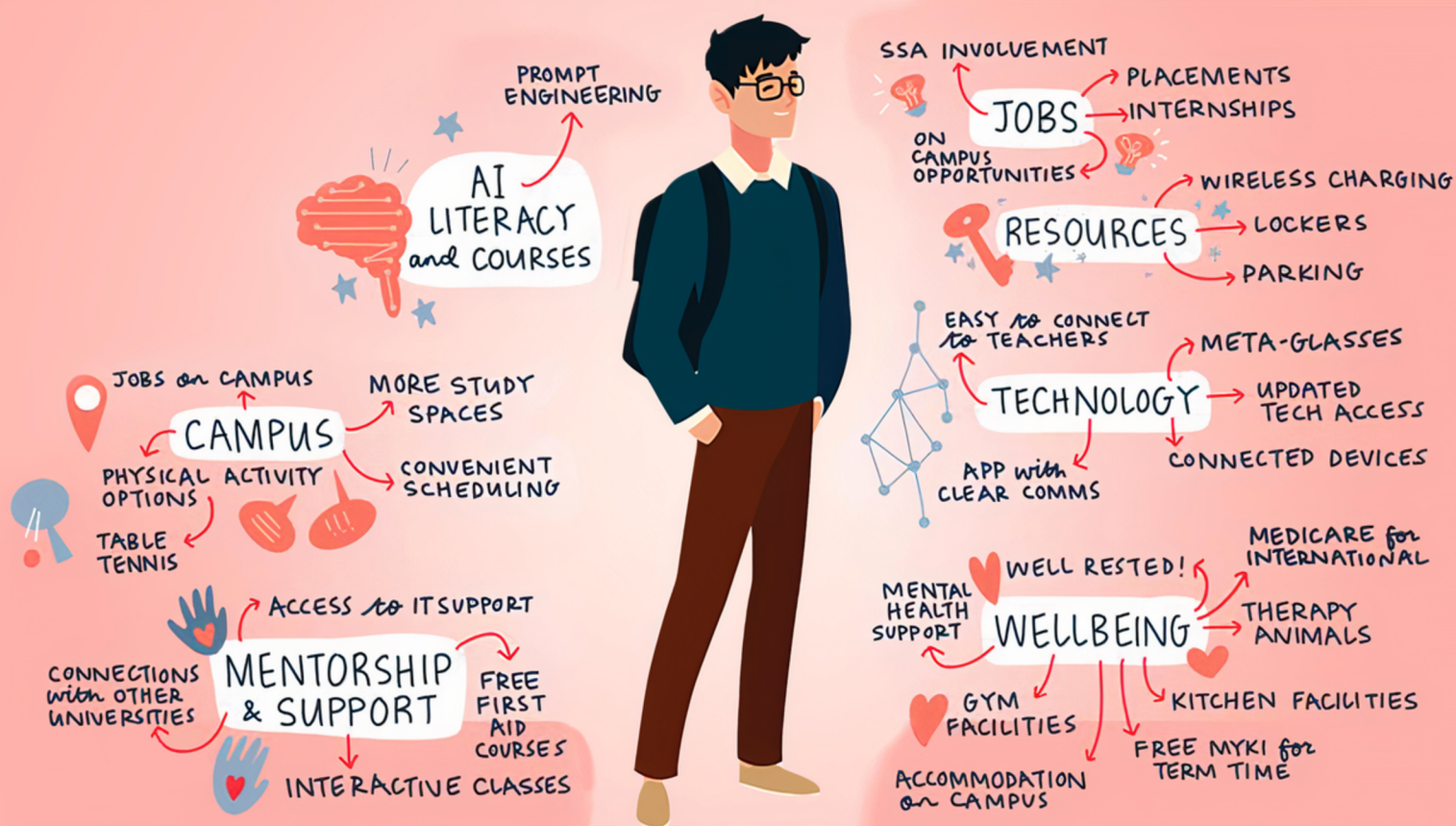
Data-driven improvement

- Consolidation of existing platforms (e.g., study space booking) into fewer systems.
- Better awareness of existing tools through data communication campaigns.

Infrastructure priorities

- Cheaper parking, more spots for students.
- New microwaves and drinking water stations.

SWINBURNE STUDENT OF THE FUTURE



As part of the 2025 Forum, participants took part in a “Swinburne Student of the Future” activity, imagining what Swinburne should look and feel like in 5-10 years’ time. They pictured a university where flexibility, affordability, and inclusion make it easier to connect, belong and succeed. Key ideas from that activity are summarised below.

- **Learning that adapts** - hybrid options, flexible scheduling, and accessible spaces that help students balance study, work, and life.
- **Useful technology and infrastructure** - connected devices, reliable charging, upgraded hardware/software, and tools that support study (including AI-assisted feedback where appropriate).
- **Digital literacy for modern work** - graduating with confidence in AI basics, prompt craft, data ethics, and the human-technology mix found in today's jobs.

Students also emphasised that thriving at university means more than academic success; it means feeling supported, safe and seen. They called for:

- **Wellbeing and belonging as core** - visible supports (wellbeing hubs, quiet spaces, therapy-animal visits), along with affordable gym and kitchen access.
- **Everyday practicality** - lockers, affordable parking, better study spaces, and dependable transport to reduce daily friction.
- **A place to live** - more affordable housing and on-campus options, so proximity and security support learning and community.

Students framed employability as part of their study, not as an add-on.

- **Built-in experience** - campus jobs, placements, and internships integrated with courses.
- **Clear and fair pathways** - transparent, inclusive access to paid opportunities across all disciplines.
- **Ongoing industry contact** - regular exposure to real settings, so confidence grows before graduation.

In this vision, a Swinburne student is capable, empowered, connected and well supported, learning in a technologically advanced environment that is deeply invested in both learning and wellbeing.

These are signals from and not prescriptions. They outline what students asked us to keep working on and where attention might matter most as conversations continue.

TURNING INSIGHTS INTO ACTION

What's shaping student life?

SSA Board and staff see three big forces shaping the next five years: AI disruption, cost-of-living pressure and growing wellbeing needs. These pressures shape how SSA thinks about its role.

How to use this report?

In this report, Forum insights are linked to broad priorities. The aim is to guide ongoing conversations about where SSA leads, where it partners and where the university needs to focus its strategy and decisions that affect students.

Strategic context

Alongside SSA's Towards 2030 plan, our goal is to engage at least half of all Swinburne students each year through our services, events and advocacy by 2030.

Where SSA typically leads (within remit)

Areas suited to direct SSA effort and investment:

- **Student life & belonging** - events, clubs, sports, and community-building that connect students across cohorts and campuses.
- **Advocacy & representation** - bringing student voice into policy, academic governance and service design.
- **Practical support** - peer networks, resources, and training that make study and campus life simpler and more inclusive.
- **SSAF-funded initiatives** - targeted projects that strengthen wellbeing, employability and community.

(Lead = convene, pilot, fund, evaluate within SSA's scope.)

Where SSA partners with the university

Priorities largely in the university remit, where SSA adds student voice and co-design:

- **Work Integrated Learning & Employability** - sharing student feedback on access, fairness, and experience to inform design.
- **Housing & Affordability** - surfacing lived realities around rent, transport, and proximity to study.
- **Teaching & Learning** - collaborating with Schools to test student-led ideas on assessment, flexibility, and engagement.
- **Wellbeing & Inclusion** - aligning SSA advocacy with Swinburne's wellbeing strategy to support proactive, holistic models.

(Partner = convene students, provide insight, co-design pilots, monitor experience.)

Turning ideas into durable improvements depends on clear roles, collaboration, and shared accountability: knowing where SSA leads, where it partners and where the university must take the primary role. This section is intended to clarify those lines.

SSA Leads	SSA Partners	University Leads
Rep trainings, club hub	School/Faculty consults	Academic governance decisions
Cross-club events, micro-grants	Venue access coordination	Space allocation & security
—	Assessment/feedback pilots	Curriculum, assessment policy
—	WIL access & fairness feedback	Credit WIL design & ops

Cross-Mapping Appendix with SSA's Towards 2030 plan and Ad Astra

Forum Theme	SSA 2030 Alignment	SUT Ad Astra Alignment
Employability & Career Development	<p>Core value: Students at the centre</p> <p>Goal: Empower students to take ownership of their student journey (Employability gives students agency, confidence and real options in their future.)</p>	<p>QL1 – Tailored and innovative pathways to success for all: students want clearer, work-ready pathways, recognition of skills and stackable learning that fits around life.</p> <p>QL3 – Co-creating industries of the future: calls for placements, industry projects and job-readiness align with learner-powered industry innovation and emerging industry ecosystems.</p> <p>Constellations: Entrepreneurial Value Creators (career confidence, problem-solving).</p>
Teaching & Learning & Assessment	<p>Core value: Students at the centre</p> <p>Goal: Empower students to take ownership of their student journey (Student-centred teaching and assessment is literally putting students at the centre of learning design.)</p>	<p>QL1 – Tailored and innovative pathways to success for all: demand for flexible learning, clear expectations and fit-for-purpose assessments connects directly to personalised learning journeys.</p> <p>QL2 – Leading and leveraging technology for purpose: students' interest in AI literacy, tech-enabled classrooms and digital assessment aligns with Swinburne's ambition to be a fully tech-infused university.</p> <p>Constellations: Tech-fluent Pioneers (effective, ethical technology use).</p>

Forum Theme	SSA 2030 Alignment	SUT Ad Astra Alignment
Student Support & Wellbeing	<p>Core value: In it together</p> <p>Goal: Establish and maintain organisational sustainability (Wellbeing, support services and feedback loops are core to a sustainable, caring SSA–Swinburne ecosystem.)</p>	<p>QL1 – Tailored and innovative pathways to success for all: personalised guidance, 24/7 support and equitable environments for diverse learner’s mirror student calls for proactive wellbeing and support services.</p> <p>Constellations: Local + Global Change Agents (human-centred, equitable communities) and Tech-fluent Pioneers where digital tools support inclusion and access.</p>
Clubs, Sports & Community	<p>Core value: Community catalysts</p> <p>Goal: Increase awareness and exposure of SSA brand, services and events (Clubs and events are the main way students encounter SSA’s brand and community-building role.)</p>	<p>QL1 – Tailored and innovative pathways to success for all: student-led clubs and communities are a key part of the vibrant, inclusive community that Ad Astra describes.</p> <p>Constellations: Local + Global Change Agents through peer leadership, inclusion and social connection; Entrepreneurial Value Creators where clubs pilot ideas, events and initiatives that create impact.</p>
Equity, Inclusion & International	<p>Core value: In it together</p> <p>Goal: Empower students to take ownership of their student journey (Equity and inclusion are about all cohorts feeling they belong, have agency, and can shape their journey.)</p>	<p>QL1 – Tailored and innovative pathways to success for all: commitment to being “the most diverse and inclusive university in Australia” directly reflects student priorities around equity and access.</p> <p>QL4 – The world is our campus: international students, global mobility and cross-cultural experiences speak to Swinburne’s global presence and partnerships.</p> <p>Constellations: Local + Global Change Agents (cultural intelligence, social justice, sustainability).</p>

Forum Theme	SSA 2030 Alignment	SUT Ad Astra Alignment
Systems, Data & Governance	<p>Core value: Making good happen (with a nod to Go above and beyond)</p> <p>Goal: Establish and maintain organisational sustainability(Good systems, data and governance are how SSA “makes good happen” and stays sustainable.)</p>	<p>QL2 – Leading and leveraging technology for purpose: students’ focus on integrated systems, data visibility and easy-to-use platforms aligns with re-engineering operations through technology and human-centred digital experiences.</p> <p>QL3 – Co-creating industries of the future (in the sense of using data and foresight to anticipate change and redesign services).</p> <p>Constellations: Tech-fluent Pioneers (navigating digital platforms and information) and Entrepreneurial Value Creators (using data for better decisions).</p>

This alignment is not about rebadging existing ideas. It is about making sure student voice directly shapes Swinburne’s next decade. The Forum themes show where SSA can mobilise students and pilot change, where we should partner with Swinburne’s portfolios, and how Ad Astra_2030 provides the institutional backbone for the priorities students have set out.

THANK YOU