D3: Student volunteering
Student Volunteering: Pivoting to unlock impact

National Volunteering Conference
13th & 14th February 2023

Alex Connor
UTS SOUL Award

• Extra-curricular community leadership and social justice action program for UTS students.

• Through training and volunteering opportunities, SOUL enables students to venture beyond their degree and into the community to skill up, give back and make change.
211 Community organisations supported in 2022

13,051 Hours volunteered in 2022
Reciprocal Partnership

- Deep Listening
- Impacts > Outputs
- Multiple ways to engage
- Build trust
STUDENTS
Changing Contexts

- University
- Student
- Volunteer Involving Organization
Changing Contexts

Student

• Time
• Return on Investment
• Drive to make Change
• Who is a student

1.6 million students in Australia

of which 500,000 are international students
Changing Contexts

University

• Work Integrated Learning
• Opportunity to channel resources and convene
• Lifetime of Learning and micro-credentialing
• Silo’d engagement approaches
Domestic High School Leaver
International Masters
Final Year Transition
Professional Career Development
24,000+ opportunities to volunteer in the year to July 2022, which was a 3% increase from 2021, but 15% fewer compared to 2019

• Applications to volunteer were down 25% y/y, the lowest they have been in four years

16% of opportunities were able to be done digitally/ remotely, up from 4% in 2019
The most popular SDGs students wanted to volunteer with are Education, Sustainability & Environment, and Gender Equality.
36% of UTS SOUL students weren’t looking for volunteering with a commitment over 6 months.
Disruptions to the norm

Student Confidence

Availability and kinds of volunteering

Burnout
Opportunities

- Online volunteering
- Community sentiment
- Increased understanding of the need for and value of the sector
- License to innovate
Engagement Strategy

University

- Broad & Supported
- Structured Ongoing
- High Investment & Return
Relationships and structures
Capacity & Confidence Building
Big Idea Hackathon

• Face to face
• Two days
• Paid organisational engagement
• Building civic responsibility & conversion to volunteering
SOUL Opportunity Accelerator

- Online
- Two weeks (25 hours per student)
- 6 hours per organization
- 125 hour research report on identified challenge
"It was incredibly fulfilling to both improve my own skills and learn about the not-for-profit sector, whilst doing work I felt was meaningful. I feel like I have a genuine experience that will help me in future."

Stuart Howarth, Bachelor of Engineering & Bachelor of Science

"The research was detailed, cohesive and clear. The report will act as a valuable resource for our team and has provided practical insights. I would recommend others to work with SOUL because of the high calibre of students and work produced."

Bindi Lea, Settlement Services International – Ignite Program
'The students had so much creative energy and were so genuine in wanting to help us get our message to the public. It was really refreshing to have that experience.'

Leanne said she would recommend participating in the program to other organisations.

‘It’s all extremely positive. I really encourage all people in my networks to make use of this program. I've been encouraging other organisations to use this because it’s been so fantastic for us.’

Leanne Ho, Executive Officer, Economic Justice Australia
Volunteer Involving Organisations

Student Volunteer Engagement Strategy

- Broad & Supported
  - Understand your purpose and goal as an organisation
  - Know what you need and why, focus on impact, be selfish

- Structured ongoing
  - Consider your structures, online? Shorter commitment?

- High investment & return
  - Can you include other resources, university, corporate, mentoring
  - Remove barriers, support travel, meals
  - Sell the benefits, work, networks