



UNSW Student Life



## International Student Summer Engagement Report

[arc.unsw.edu.au](http://arc.unsw.edu.au)



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## Introduction

The challenges faced by international students are well documented – they have a higher likelihood of experiencing isolation, depression & anxiety, poverty, exploitation and extortion. These risks were considerably amplified in the context of COVID-19 with few Australian government safety nets extended to educational visa holders.

With international students unable to return home over the Summer break, Australian domestic borders in various lockdowns, NSW citizens movements restricted, and limited opportunities for part-time work, it was imperative that Arc and UNSW work together to ensure all students are supported and socialised. To mitigate these potential harms, the UNSW international student community was invited to participate in FUNNER SUMMER.

Funner Summer was a series of direct social activities, peer facilitated activities and support mechanisms that were designed to engage this vulnerable cohort. The program featured trips and tours in Sydney and greater NSW; sport classes; volunteering opportunities; discounted groceries; additional pastoral care resources and more. Where possible, the Funner Summer was facilitated by current UNSW students whose lived experience in capturing their peers interests, communication style and passions was critical to the program's success.

Over 5 weeks, students participated in Funner Summer activities over 8600 times across over 180 different events. Funner Summer was only possible thanks to the generous financial contribution of UNSW and the agility of the UNSW student organisation Arc to rapidly activate a range of activities.

8600+  
individual  
engagements

180 different  
events

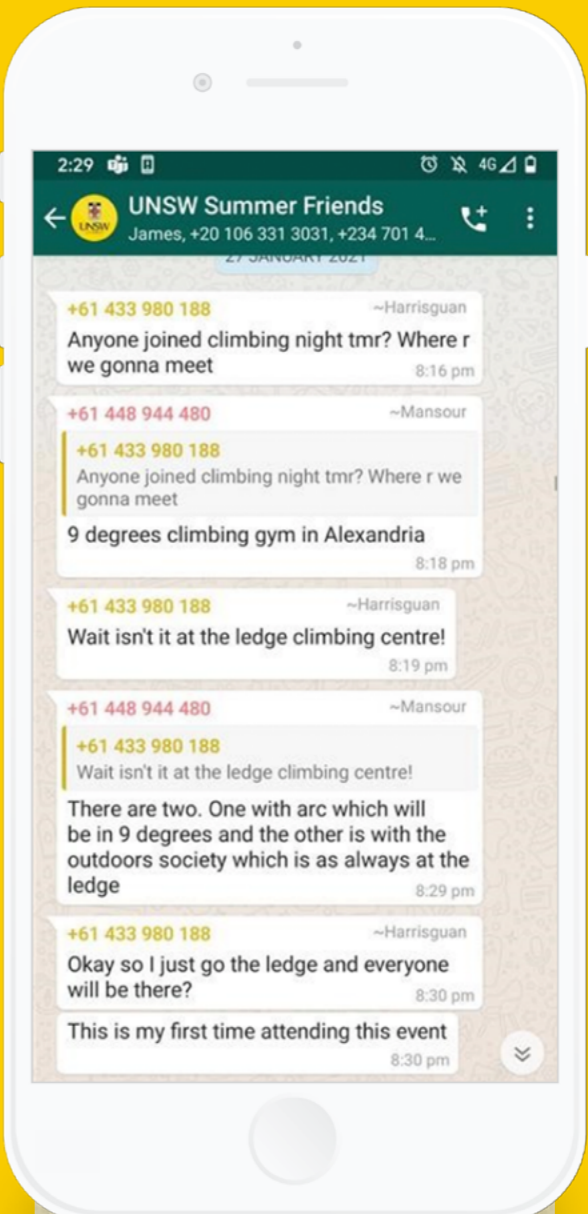
3000+  
food  
hampers

# Socialisation

Central to the objectives of Funner Summer was facilitating peer connections that would continue after the program had concluded.

## Connection

International students were invited to join Summer Friends' messaging groups on WhatsApp. The groups were popular and served their purpose of connecting eager students. Indeed, they created additional opportunities for more organic connections to be made as students took the initiative to create their own special interest groups. Across the 2 main groups there were over 500 students.



Hey guys!!! Hope you're enjoying your Saturday night. I just wanted to say Thank you so so much for everyone that has been a part of Funner Summer!!!! The lunar new year event brought the program to a close, but I am so excited to see you at other Arc events all throughout your time at UNSW. thank you for making this such a great summer with so many smiles, laughs and friends. See ya!

Thank you steph for making this happen. We had absolute fun on every trip.

^^ 100 100

Yep thanks a lot for all these events that was amazing

Thanks a lot for these events and your





# Socialisation

## Local Trips

Leveraging the success and networks of the existing Arc Goes To... tours program, Arc was able to quickly launch a huge array of local day trips for students. These were usually hosted by domestic students who greeted, welcomed and supervised international students participating. Despite group size restrictions in NSW, each trip was immensely successful, with most running multiple times.

Name	Number of trips	Total Student Participants
Summer Beach Picnic	3	87*
Bowling Trips	4	115
Mini Golf	3	95
Bridge Climb	6	110
Spit to Manly Walk	3	85
Indigenous Land & Culture Tour	3	56
Exclusive Film Screenings	5	800
Sydney Harbour Tours	5	100
Taronga Zoo	10	350
Maroubra Surf Lesson	6	72
Astronomy Observation Night	1	29
Indoor Climbing	3	86
Lunch Social	1	30

\* Planning adapted to increased COVID restrictions due to Northern Beaches outbreak



 Isolde Sandler <i.sandler@student.unsw.edu.au>  
 To:  Stephanie Baris

[Reply](#) [Reply All](#) [Forward](#) [More](#)  
 Thu 28/01/2021 11:51 PM

Hi Steph,

Thank you so much! My colleague and I made it to the opera house in time so we could join the tour.

And I would also like to thank you and your team for the great work organising all these amazing events - and so many of them over this summer! We really appreciate it.

Cheers, Isolde





# Socialisation

## Region Trips

With Sydney surrounded by incredible natural amenities, international students are eager to explore the most iconic destinations. In a typical year, the Arc volunteering program Arc Goes To... hosts numerous trips and tours to picturesque locations at affordable prices. The Funner Summer program amplified this offering with larger tour groups visiting NSW's best. These activities encouraged students to bond closely, whilst also facilitating once-in-a-lifetime adventures.

Name	Number of trips	Total Student Participants
Blue Mountains*	10	475
Jervis Bay*	3	200
Port Stephens*	7	285
Royal National Park*	4	150
Wollongong Surf School	2	60

\* Planning adapted due to increased COVID restrictions due to Northern Beaches outbreak resulting in a reduction of seats available on trips.



“ Coming as an international student you don't know the best places to go so its really great to have trips and events in place that show you the highlights. ”





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## On Campus

Frequent, convenient and accessible on campus events were also hosted with the objective of continuing students' connection to UNSW. These activities used existing infrastructure and equipment and were hosted by UNSW students to give them a particularly welcoming flavour. They replicated existing Arc events so that students will experience continuity as they return to UNSW.

Name	Number of trips	Total Student Participants
Sport	37	598
Chillout Zone	8	212
OneStep Walking Group	5	104
O-Week Odyssey and Lunar New Year	2	380
Wellness & Volunteering	3	150



UNSW  
COOGEE BEACH  
BLUE MOUNTAINS

amirul hazim <hazimasb39@gmail.com>  
To Stephanie Baris

Thu 28/01/2021 11:10 AM

Hi Stephanie,

Thank you for the reply and I just wanna say thank you for all the events organised for us international students, I felt very appreciated and I thank you guys so much, you made our lives abroad exciting and content. Wouldn't ask for a better uni.

Cheers,  
Amirul





## Support

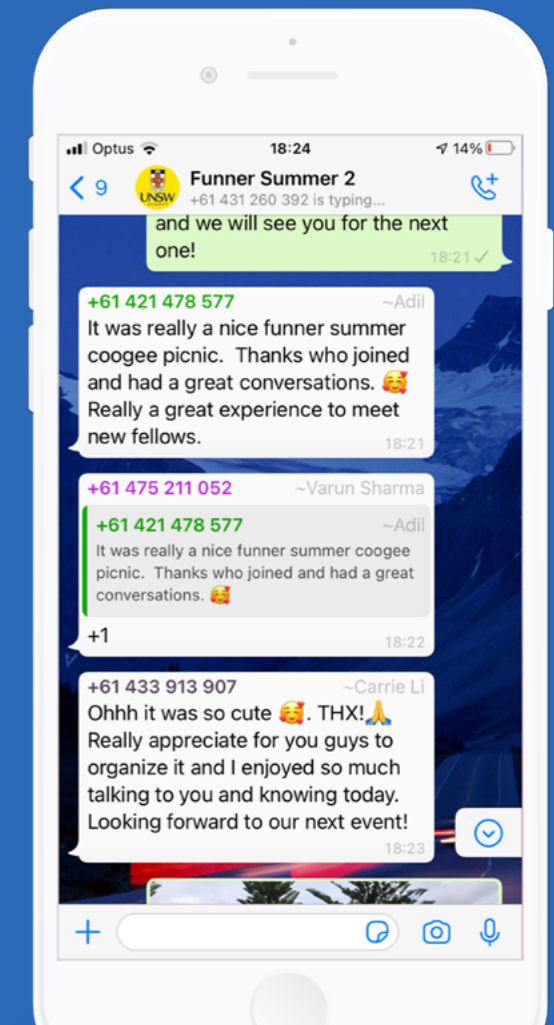
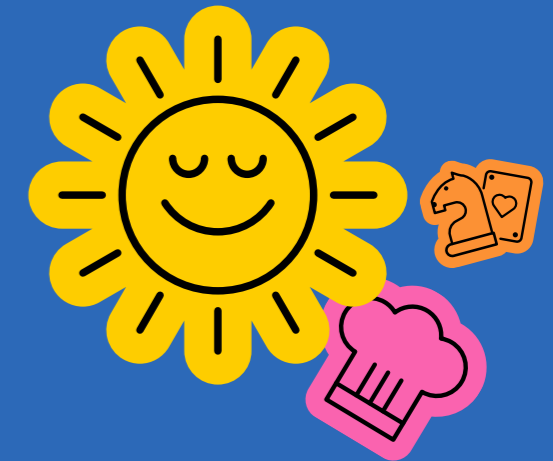
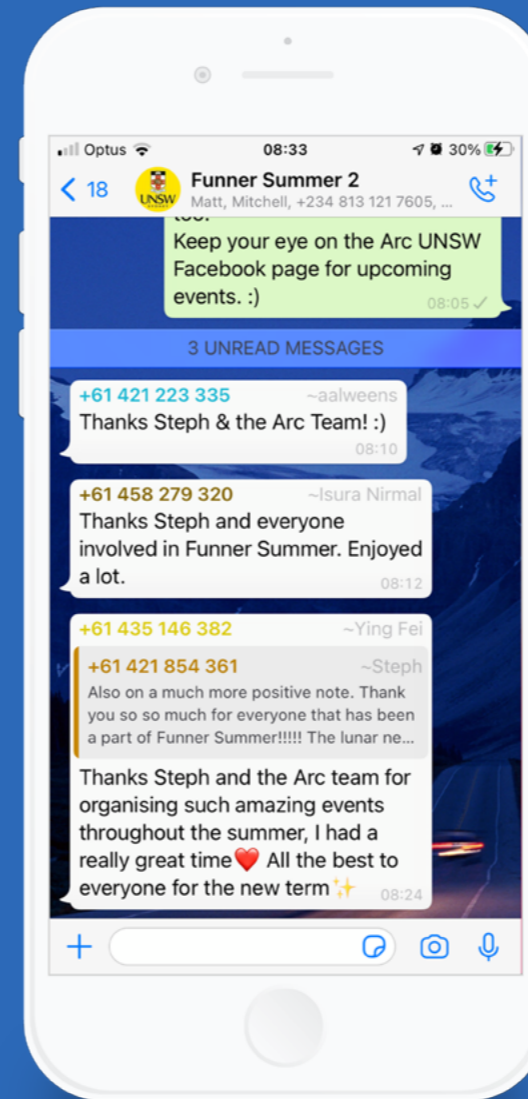
Where students were identified as particularly vulnerable, Arc leveraged existing expertise and capabilities in pastoral care, primary interventions and secondary support. Food Hub infrastructure was able to be used over the break including the provision of “holiday hampers”. Food Hub was able to enhance its service to students by additionally handing out activity passes to students. These passes meant that students would be able to socialise at their leisure, rather than be beholden to Arc scheduling. Students were grateful for the flexibility and generosity of these passes.

Name	Quantity
Food Hub	3219
Opal Cards (\$20)	1622
Taronga Zoo Passes	250
Ritz Cinema Tickets	1000

\* Passes, opal cards & 1000 movie tickets were limited to 1 per person

## Resources

Arc was able to quickly generate and translate timely and relevant legal information to students. This information was specific to international student relief services, crisis accommodation, visas and gig economy work. Arc Legal fact sheets were viewed over 3000 times over the break.



## Thanks

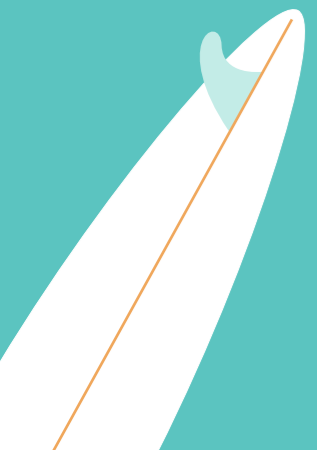
Arc is grateful to UNSW for their generous support of Funner Summer.

Andrew Walters, Vice President of Operations whose timely contribution enabled Arc to deliver the scale of programming required to support so many students.

Eileen Baldry & Merlin Crossley who brought these issues to UNSW Management.

We are grateful to the UNSW Student Communications team who were able to support and promote Funner Summer.

As always, we would like to thank all Arc staff whose above-and-beyond efforts lead to a hugely successful program that nurtured some of UNSW's most vulnerable students.







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