

Association of  
Postgraduate Students Inc.



# 2024 Impact Report



Association of Postgraduate Students Inc., our affiliated bodies and our members acknowledge and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as First Australians.

# Contents

Welcome	1
Historical Timeline	2
Postgrad Campaigns	3
Satellite Campuses	4
Postgrad Bursaries	5
Accredited Clubs & Societies	6
Orientation and Inductions	7
Celebrating Community	8
Focused on HDR Students	9
Building Postgrad Representation	10
Academic Support	11
Ambassadors	12
APS Outlook	13



01

# WELCOME

*In 2024, the Association of Postgraduate Students at the University of Queensland exemplified determination and perseverance, much like the "little engine that could."*

This year has been one of remarkable growth for APS, but through it all, our focus has remained steadfast: advocating for the rights, wellbeing, and success of UQ’s postgraduate community while fostering a vibrant, inclusive environment.

APS has become a driving force for positive change across the university. Through our initiatives, we’ve not only created new opportunities for student engagement but also strengthened leadership and representation, ensuring that the voices of postgraduates resonate more strongly than ever at UQ.

Despite our relatively small scale, APS’s impact has been profound. Our achievements are a testament to the dedication and passion of our team, who have tirelessly worked for the benefit of students.

A significant part of our success lies in our strategic focus on building partnerships across the university. By working closely with UQ departments, university leadership, and the wider UQ community, APS has embraced a collaborative, community-first approach—laying the foundation for lasting, impactful change.

**In 2024**

**18,610**

STUDENTS DIRECTLY ENGAGED WITH APS AT OVER 150 EVENTS

**1,133**

POSTGRADS APPLIED TO BECOME OFFICIAL APS AMBASSADORS

**4,103**

NEW FORMAL MEMBERS JOINED APS INC.

**1.7 million**

VIEWS ON APS INSTAGRAM

**\$132,293**

IN FUNDING PROVIDED TO THE UQ GRADUATE SCHOOL

**\$33,481**

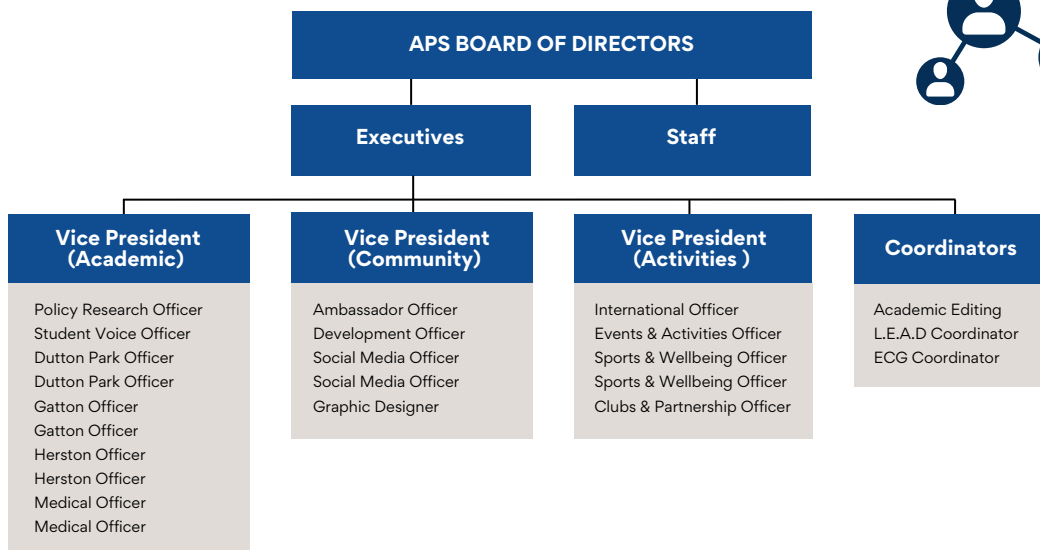
AWARDED IN INDIVIDUAL POSTGRAD BURSARIES

**13**

TOTAL APS ACCREDITED CLUBS AND ASSOCIATIONS

This transformation is reflected in APS’ new governance structure, which includes a 7-member board, a 5-member executive team, and 3 vice presidents. This structure has been designed to ensure better decision-making and for a leadership that is equipped to address the evolving needs of students. They are supported by 20 officers, 3 coordinators, and 2 skilled staff, all working together to drive the organisation forward (see graph below).

We are especially grateful to Vice Chancellor Deborah Terry, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) Kris Ryan, the Graduate School, and Angus McRae for their ongoing support. Their commitment to fostering APS’s growth has been invaluable in our efforts to build a stronger, more unified postgraduate community at UQ.



02

# HISTORICAL TIMELINE



APS was established to rebuild a strong UQ postgraduate community after VSU severely weakened independent student voices on campus.



The organisation's influence expanded across all UQ, establishing communication channels between postgrads in various faculties.



Following the SSAF Review Implementation Proposal, APS was recommended to receive 5% of SSAF funding starting in 2023.



The first AGM saw the election of APS's inaugural executive committee, officially launching the association's leadership and governance.



As acknowledged in the UQU Funding Services Agreement, APS once again independently appointed representatives to serve on university and Academic Board committees.

18 May 2011

7 June 2011

2012-2017

2018

2021



APS strengthened its partnership with the UQU by signing a MOU, which was later incorporated into the university's SSAF Framework, reinforcing APS' independence.



APS was officially recognised as an advancing education charity by the ACNC, reaffirming its dedication to supporting postgraduate students at UQ.



APS received 2.5% of the total SSAF allocation, with APS presidents serving as ex-officio members of the newly established SSAF Advisory Group.



APS achieved incorporation, a pivotal step that strengthens its governance and legal standing, laying a solid foundation for future growth.



As APS continues to evolve, it remains dedicated to advocating for postgrads, ensuring their needs and voices are represented at every level of university life.

**2022**

**16 Oct 2023**

**8 Dec 2023**

**8 Apr 2024**

**Beyond 2024**

03

# POSTGRAD CAMPAIGNS

*APS has championed postgraduates' rights, advocating for financial support, transparency, and inclusivity to improve their overall experience.*

At APS, we're all about creating real, positive change for students—from financial relief to ensuring student safety. We're proud of the work we're doing to push for policies that make a genuine difference.

One of our focuses has been addressing financial challenges. For example, we've been advocating alongside the UQ Union to raise awareness about Doctor of Dental Medicine students struggling to access Centrelink. On a broader scale, we're celebrating the government's decision to lower HECS-HELP debt indexation, a move that provides \$3 billion in relief to over three million students.

For HDR students, we've been pushing UQ to raise stipends to match other Go8 universities, and we're supporting petitions for better conditions across the board. We've also called on the government to invest more in higher education, which will benefit both domestic and international students alike.

Nationally, we've been actively promoting the National Postgraduate Student Survey, encouraging students to share their experiences to help shape the future advocacy efforts.

“ Meaningful change begins when students' voices are not only heard but valued. ”



Additionally, APS played a crucial role in revitalising the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (CAPA), helping it regain functionality as a voice for postgrads across the country.

We've also campaigned for fairer public transport fares. While we celebrated the introduction of a 50-cent flat fare for six months, we're continuing to push for long-term inclusion of part-time and external students in concession fare schemes. This ties directly into our broader commitment to equity and fairness for all students.

At the core of everything we do is a commitment to student safety and support. We've taken a firm stance against racism, condemning all forms of racial, cultural, and religious discrimination on campus. Following incidents of vandalism, we've spoken out against antisemitism, Islamophobia, and violence, while actively promoting support services for students.

Transparency is essential to building a more inclusive university community, which is why we welcomed UQ's commitment to publish its partnerships with weapons manufacturers, double humanitarian scholarships, and develop anti-racism initiatives. These actions are crucial steps in fostering a university environment where all students feel seen, heard, and supported.

Finally, reflecting on UQ's recent commitments to divestment and transparency following a major Student Union General Meeting. It was a fitting moment to acknowledge how far we've come and how much further we can go in our collective efforts to make UQ a better place.



**38,768**  
people reached  
through our  
statements



04

## SATELLITE CAMPUSES

*APS is dedicated to supporting satellite campuses like Gatton, Herston, and Dutton Park, providing tailored resources, events, and representation.*

This year, APS has made it a priority to ensure postgrads at UQ's satellite campuses—Dutton Park, Gatton, and Herston—feel supported and connected. Through a range of events, from casual social gatherings to cultural celebrations and wellbeing initiatives, we've worked to foster a vibrant campus life for all. With 11.3% of our members from satellite campuses, we have a dedicated team of six officers focused on meeting their specific needs.

At each campus, APS has created opportunities for students to engage with peers, whether through coffee chats or larger cultural events. Our aim is to provide opportunities where postgrads can connect.

As we approach the end of the year, APS remains committed to advocating for and supporting satellite campus students, ensuring they have the resources and opportunities to make the most of their postgraduate experience. The strong community we've built is just the beginning, and we're eager to continue building on this momentum in the coming year.



**2000+**  
Students Reached at  
Satellite Campuses



**30+**  
Events & Activities



**500+**  
Servings of Coffee at  
Coffee Catch-ups

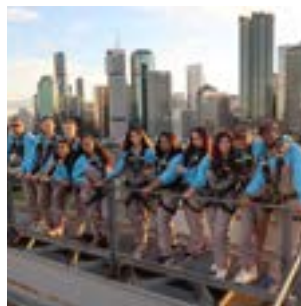


**125**  
Pots of Honey  
Handed Out

## HERSTON CAMPUS

At Herston, we curated a diverse calendar of events to keep students engaged throughout the year. Early on, Coffee Catchups and Mixers at Café Dose offered a relaxed setting for students to connect as they began their studies. These laid the foundation for more adventurous outings, such as the Herston Hiking Trip in March and the Story Bridge Climb in April, which allowed students to bond while exploring the city - some for the first time. In May, the Rock Climbing event challenged students in a team-focused environment, while the Postgrad Mixer in July provided a casual evening for networking and building connections.

September and October featured ongoing Coffee Chats, offering a more intimate space for students to catch up. A highlight of the year was the North Stradbroke Island trip in September, where students explored one of Queensland's most stunning landscapes. We wrapped up the year with the Herston Cultural Night in October, a vibrant celebration of campus diversity, featuring food, music, and performances that left a lasting impression on all who attended.



## DUTTON PARK CAMPUS

At Dutton Park, a new campus that has been a strong focus for us this year, we began with Boost Week, offering a variety of activities to help students settle into campus life. Throughout the year, our regular Coffee Chats provided a welcoming space for students to relax, take a break from their studies, and connect with peers and staff. The Bubble Tea Giveaways in June and August were particularly popular, offering a fun and informal way for students to engage and enjoy refreshments between classes. In addition, our themed trivia nights and wellness workshops further enriched the student experience, offering relaxation and valuable skills.

We also introduced social and interactive events like June's Trivia Night, where students could test their knowledge in a lighthearted competition. September focused on student wellbeing, with the Honey Pots Wellbeing Treat providing mindfulness kits and self-care tips, a standout moment that emphasised the importance of taking time for oneself. On the same day, the Sweet Sips and Bites event encouraged students to gather over coffee and snacks, highlighting the connection between self-care and social engagement in a relaxed setting. To wrap up the year, we had Bloom and Brew, featuring live music, tea blending workshops, and creative art sessions.



## GATTON CAMPUS

At Gatton, we created events that reflect the campus's unique vibe and close-knit community. We kicked off the year with a bang at Gatton Market Day in February, which brought in a great turnout of students eager to connect with local companies, university services, and each other.

We mixed things up with a Karaoke Night at Morrison Hall, where students could let loose and have fun, showing off their singing skills—or at least their enthusiasm—in a relaxed atmosphere.

During Connect Week we gave students a chance to reconnect after the break and gear up for the new semester. These events have been key in keeping the campus community engaged, giving students opportunities to meet new people and feel more at home. The Postgrad Catchup in September continued to build on this, providing a space for postgrad students to connect with one another.

On the wellbeing front, we hosted a Self-Defence Workshop in October, giving students practical tools for personal safety.

One of the highlights of the year was the Diwali celebration in October, a colourful and vibrant event that brought students together to celebrate this important cultural festival. The year wrapped up with a Puppy Patting session, offering students a fun, stress-relieving activity to help them unwind.



05

## POSTGRAD BURSARIES

*Empowering postgrad students, the Postgrad Bursary offers crucial financial support for research, conferences, and professional development.*

Postgrad students, from both PhD and coursework programs, face significant financial challenges as they pursue their academic and professional aspirations. The APS Postgraduate Bursary provides crucial support to these students, with around 80% of recipients being PhD candidates and the remaining 20% coursework students. This bursary covers costs such as conference attendance, professional development materials, and research-related expenses.

One applicant shared the importance of their conference in MRI research: “My abstract has been accepted for a post-demonstration presentation, and I am eager to participate in person at this esteemed event. However, I am still facing financial constraints concerning travel expenses. I am hopeful that the APS Postgraduate Bursary can provide the additional funding needed for me to attend this crucial conference.”

Another student expressed how attending their conference would be a vital step in their career: “I want to pursue an academic career in plant science, and this will be a valuable opportunity to share my research with an international cohort and connect with other researchers. However, there is a lack of funding for HDR students to travel to conferences in my school and faculty.”

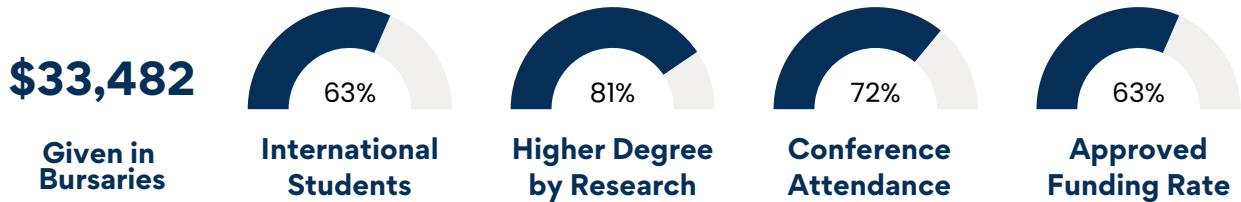
“ The bursary means fewer ‘Which is it: electricity bill or children’s food?’ choices, and better focus on my PhD. ”

The bursary also provides relief to coursework students facing financial hardships while managing placements and professional development. “Our family has 2 young children and we’re renting a home. Since my husband lost his job 2 times in 2022, I felt quite stressed about our financial security.”

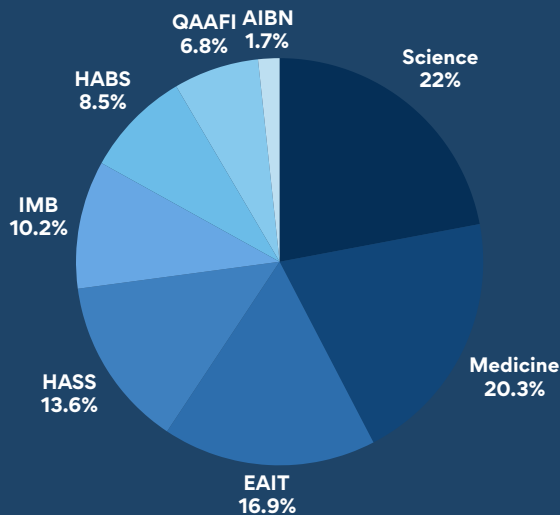
One student, facing significant stress due to family circumstances, explained: “I regularly go without basic necessities to make it work... The bursary means fewer ‘Which is it: electricity bill or children’s food?’ choices, and better focus on my PhD.”

For many, this financial support is essential for continuing their studies and accessing critical career opportunities. As one final-year PhD student stated, “This conference would significantly contribute to my future career.” The bursary is not just a financial lifeline; it is a vital enabler of academic and professional success for students across disciplines.

## KEY BURSARY RECIPIENT STATISTICS



### Faculty Breakdown



### Countries Travelled

- Singapore
- China
- France
- United States
- New Zealand
- Portugal
- Brazil
- Argentina
- Spain
- Italy
- England
- Ireland
- Canada
- Finland
- Austria
- Germany
- Netherlands
- Panama

### Conferences Attended

- International Conference on Software Engineering
- IEEE/CVF CVPR 2024 Conference
- World Cancer Conference (ESMO 2024)
- The Web Conference 2024
- International Water Association (IWA) Conference
- FSE 2024 Conference
- European Federation of Neuroscience Societies
- World Biomaterial Congress 2024
- European Congress on Biotechnology
- International Society for Music Education
- 3rd Joint International Conference of AITVM-STVM
- Plant and Animal Genomics (PAG) Conference and many more...



06

## ACCREDITED CLUBS & SOCIETIES

*Strengthening APS-accredited clubs and societies by fostering postgrad engagement, leadership growth, and enriching opportunities within the campus community.*

APS proudly supports postgraduate student societies that are led by and serve UQ's postgraduate community. These accredited clubs and societies foster engagement across faculties, demographics, and campuses, promoting interaction, well-being, and a sense of belonging within UQ's diverse postgraduate cohort.

With 13 clubs and societies representing over 2,000 students, APS-accredited groups play a vital role in shaping the postgraduate student experience. They offer a range of academic, social, and cultural activities, creating opportunities for postgraduate students to connect, collaborate, and support each other throughout their academic journey.

These clubs serve as important platforms for leadership development, peer engagement, and community-building. Through events and initiatives, they bring students together, encouraging cross-disciplinary connections and promoting a holistic postgraduate experience. APS is committed to empowering these societies, providing them with resources, guidance, and support to enhance their impact.

By partnering with these dynamic groups, APS helps to ensure that the postgraduate community at UQ remains vibrant, inclusive, and well-supported, contributing to the overall well-being and success of its members.



APS contributed funding to several research symposiums, including the SCMB Research Students Symposium, IMB Student Symposium, AIBN Research Student Symposium, and the Next Gen Ag Symposium. These events enabled HDR students to present their work, exchange ideas, and connect with peers and industry professionals, fostering a collaborative research community.

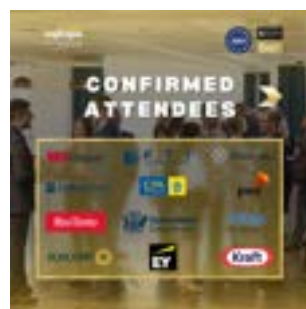
Cultural events were also a key focus for APS, including supporting the Hindu Cultural Society's Navratri celebrations and the SMI Jackals' International Night, both of which promoted cultural exchange and inclusivity within the postgraduate community. Additionally, APS helped fund the Graduate Taiwanese Gold Coast Trip, which offered students a unique opportunity to engage with their peers off-campus.

Professional development was emphasised through support for the BSPA Industry Networking Night (INN), providing students with critical networking opportunities.

In the realm of health and community impact, APS supported Oncology's Cocktails for Cancer, a meaningful charity event, and contributed to the School of Public Health, Poche Centre for Indigenous Health, and Centre for Health Services Research HDR Retreat, which focused on advancing HDR research and student well-being.

Recreational and social engagement was encouraged through funding for the Annual UQ Inter-Institute Soccer Tournament, promoting sportsmanship and collaboration among students from various institutes, and by providing SBMS SASS Materials.

Through these initiatives, APS continues to invest in the diverse needs of UQ's postgraduate students, fostering a supportive and enriching university environment.



07

## ORIENTATIONS AND INDUCTIONS

*APS was there every step of the way, offering support and connection to new postgraduates at orientations and inductions.*

This year, APS played a key role in delivering tailored orientation and induction events, ensuring postgraduate students across UQ's campuses—especially those in specialised and satellite programs—felt supported and connected from the start. Our involvement has ensured that students from a variety of faculties begin their academic journey with a strong sense of belonging.

For Faculty of Medicine students, the UQ Med First Year Orientation provided crucial resources and peer support, preparing them for the demands of their program. Similarly, the HASS Orientation Mixer allowed Humanities and Social Sciences postgrads to connect with peers and faculty, fostering early collaboration, while Psychology postgrads received personalised guidance in their field through their own orientation.

At Herston, where students focus on health disciplines, the Herston Orientation Mixer helped those in the School of Public Health feel connected despite their distance from the main campus. These tailored events were essential for creating a strong support network and introducing key academic contacts.

Through events like Postgrad Speed Friending, APS brought together postgrads from all faculties, helping them form early connections. For students new to UQ or Brisbane, this was an important step in building a supportive network. Market Days at St Lucia and Gatton further integrated students into campus life by introducing them to clubs, services, and opportunities.

For HDRs, who often face a more solitary academic experience, events like the HDR Meet 'n' Greet and Sausage Sizzle provided essential spaces for them to connect.

Faculty-specific mixers offered more opportunities for networking, while social events like the Postgrad Cocktail Party gave students a relaxed setting.

By being actively involved in these orientation and induction programs, APS ensured that postgrads across all faculties and campuses, including Herston and Gatton, were set up for success. Our involvement has strengthened the sense of community, making students feel supported from the moment they arrive, which provides benefits for their academic journey.



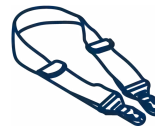
**5489**  
Students Directly  
Engaged with APS



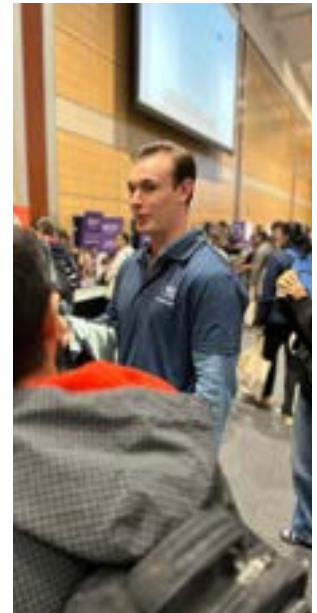
**25**  
Orientation Events  
& Activities



**600+**  
Litres of Iced Tea



**2000+**  
Lanyards Given



08

## CELEBRATING COMMUNITY THROUGH EVENTS

*Highlighting community spirit through diverse events that foster connection, celebrate culture, and create lasting experiences within the APS network.*

APS has played a crucial role in building a vibrant and supportive community for postgraduates at the University of Queensland in 2024. Through a diverse range of events, APS has created an environment where students can flourish academically, socially, and culturally, while also focusing on their overall wellbeing. This balanced approach ensures that the diverse needs of the postgraduate community are met, enriching their time at university.

Cultural inclusivity is a key aspect of APS's mission. By hosting events that celebrate the diverse backgrounds of the postgraduate community, APS encourages students to share their cultural traditions and build a sense of belonging. These initiatives promote appreciation for diversity and strengthen the connections between students from different backgrounds.

Social events are a vital part of APS's strategy, offering opportunities for students to relax, make new friends, and feel more connected to the university community. These gatherings provide a break from academic pressures, helping to alleviate isolation and foster a spirit of camaraderie among postgraduates.

APS also recognises the specific challenges faced by students at satellite campuses, ensuring that community-building efforts extend beyond the main campus. This inclusive approach ensures that all postgraduates, regardless of location, feel connected and supported. It reflects APS's dedication to accessibility and creating a welcoming environment for all.

A focus on student wellbeing is at the heart of APS's mission. Through events that support mental health and stress management, APS helps students balance their academic and personal lives. This commitment to wellbeing ensures that students can navigate the pressures of postgraduate study with the resources they need to stay healthy.

In sum, APS's approach is multifaceted, catering to the varied interests and needs of postgraduates. By integrating professional growth, cultural appreciation, social connection, and wellbeing support, APS has built a dynamic and thriving community that enhances the university experience for all postgraduates.

## SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

The APS social calendar was dynamic, offering a mix of large-scale parties, casual get-togethers, and interactive workshops, ensuring there was something for everyone. Social events were key in building friendships, reducing feelings of isolation, and creating a fun, engaging postgraduate experience.

The Food Festival was one of the marquee events, appealing to students from all backgrounds with its celebration of global cuisines. The event created a lively marketplace atmosphere where students could explore a variety of foods, while also enjoying live performances and socialising with peers.

The Postgrad Galaxy Ball and the Halloween Horror Night provided opportunities for students to dress up, let loose, and celebrate in a more festive setting. The Postgrad Galaxy Ball stood out as a key formal event. Students could network and celebrate their achievements in style. Meanwhile, Halloween Horror Night tapped into the fun, high-energy aspects of the social calendar, offering a themed night of costumes and entertainment, a clear hit.

Smaller social events like Movie Nights, Boardgames Night, and Bubble Tea Workshops catered to students looking for lower-key, but still highly enjoyable, ways to socialise. These events helped balance the social calendar by providing spaces for students who might prefer more relaxed, intimate gatherings over larger parties. Canvas & Convos blended social interaction with creativity, offering students a chance to unwind while exploring their artistic side.

The variety of social events also included day trips, such as the Movie World Trip and the Byron Bay Trip, which gave students a chance to explore areas outside of campus and bond with peers through shared travel experiences. These excursions provided a refreshing break from academic life and allowed students to experience more of what the region has to offer.



## SPORTING ACTIVITIES

While there were fewer sports events compared to social and cultural activities, they played an important role in encouraging physical activity, teamwork, and connections among postgrads. These events offered students a chance to enjoy light-hearted competition while promoting health and wellness.

Social Beach Volleyball and the River Kayak Adventure were particularly popular, providing accessible ways for students to stay active in a relaxed, social environment. These events were designed to be inclusive, ensuring that students of all fitness levels could participate and enjoy themselves. The Park Run, a year-long recurring event, offered a consistent outlet for students looking to incorporate regular fitness into their routines. Its ongoing nature allowed for community building, as participants had the chance to engage with fellow runners and support each other's fitness goals.

There were also unique events like the Euro Final Screening, which, although a passive sport-related activity, drew interest from students eager to engage in communal viewings of international sports tournaments. Sporting outings added an element of adventure, mixing entertainment with physicality in a more informal context.

While these events appealed to active students and sports fans, there's potential to grow the sports program by adding more varied and beginner-friendly activities that could attract a broader range of students.



## WELLBEING ACTIVITIES

Wellbeing-focused events provided critical support for students' mental health and emotional resilience. These activities addressed the increasing demands on students' mental well-being, especially during high-stress periods such as exams.

The SWOTVAC Study Retreat Space in conjunction with UQU Student Rights, Jordy Duffey, was one of the most impactful wellbeing initiatives, offering students a dedicated space to study and focus during exam periods. This event was particularly appreciated for its calming environment, which helped alleviate the stress and isolation often associated with exam preparation.

Other wellbeing initiatives, like Yoga Sessions, Self-Defence Workshops, and Paws Grad Puppy Party, offered students creative and physical outlets to relax and recharge. These events were effective in addressing a variety of wellness needs, from physical fitness to stress relief and self-care. The Canvas & Convos sessions, which combined art with relaxation, provided an engaging way for students to manage their mental health through creativity. The Invisible Disabilities Week Workshop added a layer of inclusivity, recognising the importance of catering to diverse student needs and providing education around mental health. And let's not forget the Stress Free Zone: Reptile and Wombat edition at Herston.



## CULTURAL EVENTS



Cultural events have been a cornerstone of the APS event lineup, providing vibrant, immersive experiences that celebrate the rich diversity of the postgrads cohort. These events served not only as opportunities for cultural exchange but also as vital spaces where international students could feel at home by sharing their traditions with others.

Holi, Navratri, and Diwali were the standout cultural celebrations, drawing in large crowds and creating high-energy, festive atmospheres that appealed to a broad spectrum of students. Holi, the festival of colours, saw incredible participation, with its playful and inclusive nature resonating with all students. Navratri, celebrated through traditional garba and dandiya dancing, and Diwali, the festival of lights, were equally significant in their ability to bring students together to celebrate Indian culture, spirituality, and joy.

These large-scale festivals were complemented by more intimate cultural gatherings such as Henna & Tea and the Salu-Salo Filipino Postgrads. These smaller events catered to specific communities within the postgraduate population but also invited broader participation. Chai Par Charcha, for example, offered a casual platform for students to bond over tea while discussing cultural and social issues.

Anthropology Museum Tours and celebrations like the Moon Festival added an academic and exploratory dimension to the cultural lineup, providing opportunities for students to engage with global heritage in a more educational context. The success of these cultural events indicates their importance not just for entertainment, but for the deeper connections they foster among students, bridging cultural gaps and encouraging inclusivity.

## MEDICAL

APS is dedicated to supporting UQ medical students through a variety of initiatives that enhance both their academic journey and overall well-being. This support includes funding essential equipment for students on placement and providing coffee machines at medical hubs, including those at rural clinics across Queensland, ensuring that students have access to key resources during their placements.

In addition, APS organises well-being morning teas at major hospitals like RBWH, Toowoomba, and Mater Hospital, offering students a chance to relax and connect. APS also supports medical students participating in UQIC social sports events, encouraging a balanced lifestyle beyond academics. Furthermore, APS proudly sponsors the UQMS Ashintosh Charity, which raises funds for children in need, highlighting its commitment to community impact. Through these initiatives, APS ensures that UQ medical students receive both the academic and emotional support they need to thrive in medical school and beyond.



## FAMILIES

APS is committed to supporting student-parents through tailored initiatives that address their unique challenges. One key offering is the Student-Parent Welfare Bursary, providing financial assistance to help ease the burden of balancing academic life with family responsibilities. This bursary ensures that students who are parents can focus on their studies while receiving the support they need.

Additionally, APS hosts Family Fun Fairs throughout the year, creating enjoyable and inclusive events for students and their children. These fairs feature a variety of kid-friendly activities, such as craft stations, puppy therapy, jumping castles, clown machines, rides, and more, offering a day of fun and relaxation for families.

Through these initiatives, APS fosters a welcoming community for student-parents, ensuring they have access to both financial and social support to thrive in their academic and personal lives.

09

## FOCUSED ON HDR STUDENTS

*APS focuses on support for HDRs by providing a wide range of events, funding, resources, and opportunities for professional development and well-being.*

APS plays a vital role in supporting HDR students at UQ through a range of initiatives designed to enhance their academic experience, well-being, and sense of community. One of the key events organised by APS is HDR Week, a celebration of the HDR community featuring activities such as HDR Speedfriending, LinkedIn Headshots, Penny University meetups, Food Trucks, Canvas Painting, Thesis Hat Competition, Puppy Therapy, a Festive Feast, and an HDR Movie Night. These events foster networking, relaxation, and creative expression, helping HDR students engage with peers and take a well-deserved break from their research.

Beyond HDR Week, APS regularly supports HDR students through initiatives such as PhD Pizzeria, Visualise Your Thesis, and the Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competition. These programs allow students to connect, develop skills, and showcase their research. APS also proudly funded the School of Psychology's HDR Day, which brought together 100 attendees, reinforcing its commitment to fostering a supportive community for HDR students.

APS also provides academic assistance through HDR academic editing services, ensuring students have access to professional support in refining their work.

APS works in close collaboration with the UQ Graduate School, offering direct financial support for key programs and initiatives. APS supported the Graduate School for initiatives like the Career Development Framework, further strengthening the support available to HDR students.

Additionally, APS offers bursaries, with 81% of them going to HDR students, providing financial assistance to support their research and studies. Through its network of university committee representatives, APS ensures that HDR students' voices are heard at the highest levels of university governance, advocating for their needs and helping shape policies that directly impact their academic journey. Through these diverse forms of support, APS is committed to fostering a strong, inclusive, and supportive environment for HDR students.

## GRADUATE SCHOOL COLLABORATION

APS is proud to collaborate closely with the UQ Graduate School to enhance the postgraduate student experience, particularly through initiatives like the Career Development Framework (CDF). This partnership is key to providing HDR students with the necessary skills and opportunities to succeed in both academic and professional environments.

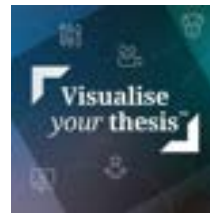
In 2024, APS allocated \$132,293 to the Graduate School to support the CDF and other critical initiatives aimed at promoting HDR student welfare, academic excellence, and employability.

These funds enable the delivery of workshops, sessions, and networking events that focus on transferable and professional skills development. These initiatives help HDR students cultivate leadership, problem-solving, and collaborative abilities, ensuring they are well-prepared for the challenges of today's dynamic research landscape.

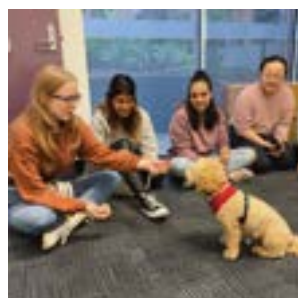
As part of this collaboration, APS is also leading the organisation of HDR Week, a series of events designed to support and celebrate the HDR community at UQ. These events provide opportunities for students to engage in professional development, build their networks, and improve their mental well-being.

HDR Week is a key highlight of the partnership between APS and the Graduate School, reflecting our shared commitment to fostering a strong, supportive, and interconnected HDR community.

Through this collaboration, APS is dedicated to ensuring that HDR students receive the resources and support needed to succeed, both during their time at UQ and beyond graduation.



APS has provided funding and support for UQ Library's Visualise Your Thesis competition and the Graduate School's Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competition. These initiatives offer postgraduate students valuable opportunities to present their research creatively and concisely. By backing these platforms, APS helps students develop essential communication and presentation skills, contributing to their academic and professional success.



10

## BUILDING POSTGRAD REPRESENTATION

*As postgrad students navigate the complexities of uni life, APS is working behind the scenes to ensure their voices are heard in key decision-making spaces across the university.*

This year has been a productive and transformative one for APS as we've worked diligently to secure strong postgraduate representation across a wide range of university committees. Our efforts have ensured that postgraduate students are seated at decision-making tables, including key committees like the Assessment Sub-Committee, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Management Committee, and the Research and Innovation Committee. Through these placements, we've advocated for postgraduates in crucial areas such as academic policy, digital learning, and research development. Whether it's coursework issues or HDR initiatives, APS has made sure that the postgraduate community has a voice in shaping UQ's future.

While we've made great strides, we recognise that there's more to be done. Next year, we're focusing on solidifying our presence and making our representatives even more effective. We aim to equip our committee reps with the tools they need to not just participate but actively drive meaningful change.

To achieve this, we're planning to launch specialised training and mentorship programs that will empower our nominees with the skills, confidence, and knowledge required to advocate effectively on behalf of postgraduates.

Moreover, APS is looking to expand our representation on additional university committees. While we've made significant progress in academic and research governance, we recognise the importance of broadening our influence into other areas. This expanded reach will ensure that postgraduates are represented across all facets of university life, reflecting the diverse needs and experiences of our community.

Our priority for the coming year is to strengthen and solidify our impact. We're committed to working even harder to make sure the postgraduate voice is heard and valued in all key decisions at UQ. APS is excited about what lies ahead, and we're confident that with more focused representation and enhanced support for our reps, we can build an even stronger, unified voice for postgraduates in 2025.





## ACADEMIC SUPPORT

*Providing tailored academic support for APS members, enhancing study skills, professional development, and fostering a collaborative postgrad learning environment.*

Over the past year, the APS has been dedicated to providing postgraduate students with a wide range of academic and professional development opportunities. These initiatives were designed to help students navigate their academic journey while preparing them for successful careers beyond university.

APS also ran practical workshops like the Resume & LinkedIn Workshop and the Mock Interview Workshop, which were designed to boost students' employability. These sessions provided hands-on guidance on crafting resumes, enhancing LinkedIn profiles, and refining interview skills, helping students build confidence as they approach the job market.

Another important activity was the Biotech Industry Night, which gave students a unique opportunity to connect with professionals from the biotech sector and learn more about developments in the field.

The Career Expo and Industry Event were other major highlights, bringing together a diverse group of potential employers and offering students a glimpse into different industries. It was an excellent opportunity for students to network, ask questions, and gather advice from professionals across various fields.

In addition to these career-focused events, APS continued to run ongoing academic support programs. The ever-popular "Shut Up and Write" sessions gave students a quiet, dedicated space to focus on their thesis or research work, helping them stay productive and motivated. The English Conversation Group, designed for ESOL students, created a welcoming environment for improving spoken English while also helping participants adjust to Australian culture. These sessions not only focused on language skills but also fostered a sense of community, allowing students to make connections while improving their communication skills.

The L.E.A.D. (Leadership, Exploration, Advocacy, Development) program was another exciting initiative designed to help postgrads develop essential leadership and soft skills. Through workshops covering topics like entrepreneurship, research, and advocacy, students were able to gain practical experience that will serve them well both academically and professionally. With personalised feedback and networking opportunities, the program gave participants a well-rounded experience, preparing them for leadership roles in their chosen fields. Many participants found the mentorship aspect especially valuable, gaining insights from experienced professionals.

Another key resource this year was the HDR Academic Editing Program, which provided postgraduate research students with professional editing support for their thesis drafts. The program focused on improving clarity, structure, and academic rigour, ensuring that students could produce high-quality research while also developing their writing skills. By offering detailed feedback and adhering to UQ's integrity guidelines, this program has been instrumental in supporting students through the often challenging process of thesis writing.

In all, APS has worked hard this year to support postgraduate students at UQ, both academically and professionally. Whether through career expos, academic editing, or leadership development, APS has been there to help students thrive in every aspect of their postgraduate journey.



12

## AMBASSADORS

*Building the APS volunteers network through meaningful engagement, skill-building opportunities, and fostering a culture of service within the postgraduate community.*



**1103**  
Ambassador EOIs



**120+**  
Unique Volunteers



**1200+**  
Total Hours



**6**  
Gave 40+ Hours

This year, the APS Ambassadors program has truly flourished, thanks to the commitment and energy of our incredible volunteers. With each Ambassador bringing their unique skills and enthusiasm to the table, we've made a significant impact on the postgraduate community.

APS, works to enhance the welfare, social and professional lives of postgraduate coursework and HDR students. The programme is designed to provide students with a professional and community service experience, whilst developing them to emerge as a great leader.

APS follows an agential student-centred learning design via an immersive experience of different projects to develop skills and attributes such as problem solving, creativity, negotiation, marketing and communication, which formal curricular activities cannot replicate (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1998).

This echoes constructivist learning approaches through the participatory and experiential nature of each projects, whilst providing intrinsic motivation for students due to the meaningfulness of the projects they create and lead (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1998).

These entitlements align with Kolb's (2015) notion of experiential learning, with students granted opportunities for deeper learning and understanding to be developed. Other notable holistic education curricula include Emory University's research on Social, Emotional and Ethical (SEE) Learning (Inguai-Dixon, 2021), Association Montessori International's Montessori Education, and International Baccalaureate Organisation's Transdisciplinary Education.

#### Ambassador Benefits:

- Leadership skill development
- Eligible toward Employability Award
- Professional development opportunities
- Appreciation certificate
- Letter of recommendation
- Discount vouchers
- Official postgraduate merchandise
- Free/discounted event tickets
- Exclusive thank-you events

As we reflect on the successes of this past year, we look forward to welcoming even more passionate postgraduates to our team. With every hour volunteered, our Ambassadors help create a more inclusive, vibrant, and supportive postgraduate community.



13

## FUTURE OF APS

*Building a stronger APS in 2025 through organisational growth, improved support structures, and a renewed commitment to the postgraduate community.*

APS stands at a pivotal moment, looking toward a future of expansion and greater influence. What began as a modest group has transformed into a vital organisation rooted in the postgraduate landscape. As APS moves forward, it must deepen its commitment to advocacy, inclusivity, and support across all UQ campuses.

With an expanding membership and growing trust, APS is poised to not only advocate for students but also influence policy at the highest levels. APS aims to speak on key issues like funding, mental health, and academic support, ensuring postgraduates' voices are heard. Strengthening relationships with university leadership and external stakeholders will be crucial to protecting postgraduates' interests.

APS's strategic use of the Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) is key to its growth. However, ensuring the SSAF is maximised to meet postgraduates' evolving needs will be essential. By strengthening advocacy and fully leveraging its resources, APS is paving the way for a stronger, more inclusive future.







The heart of postgrad life at UniQld.

