The James Cook University trial of YourTutor

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Learning, Teaching and Student Engagement

With thanks to Dr Nick Emtage, Dr Kayla Morris, Ms Jill Thomas for statistical analyses.

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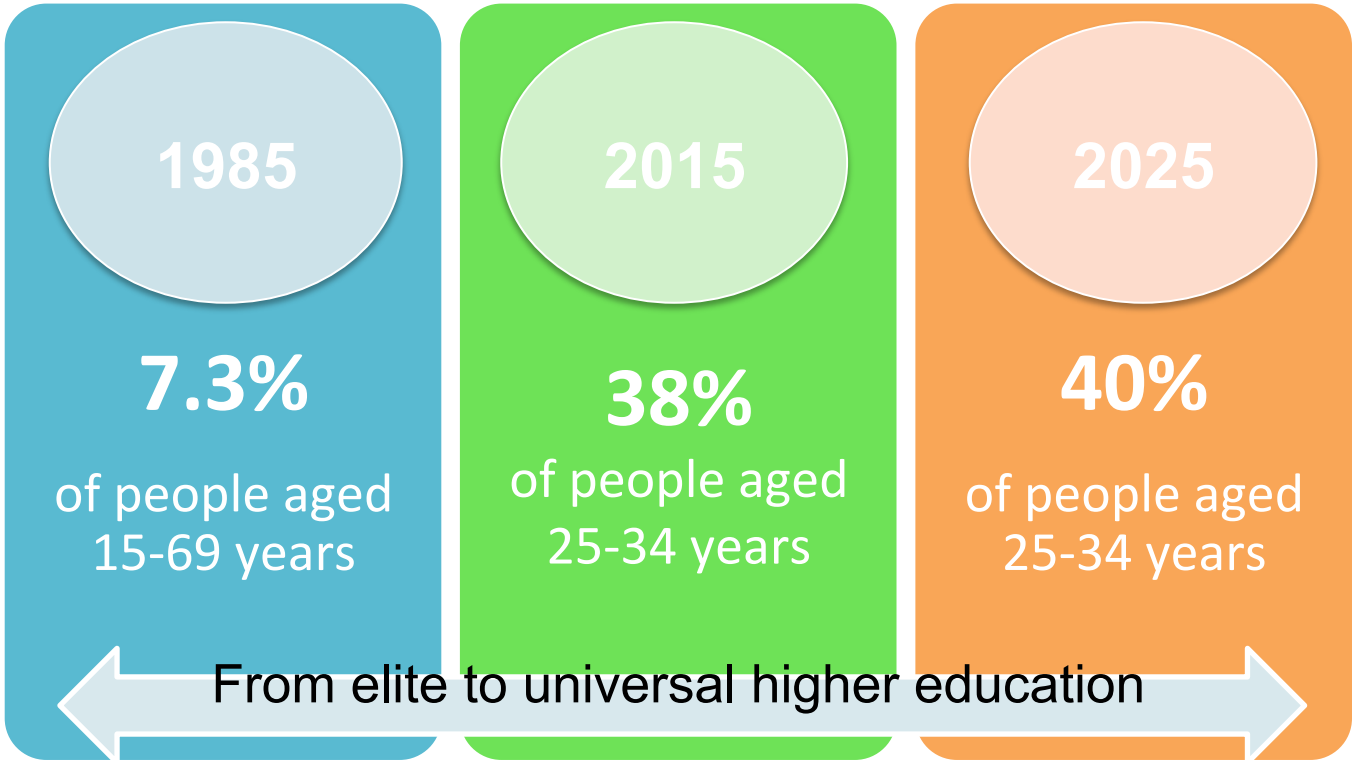
AUSTRALIA

Cairns
Singapore

The James Cook University experience

- Locating JCU
- The JCU Learning Centre approach to enhancing student success and the role of the YourTutor service
- The JCU experience
- Conclusions and considerations

The Australian context



Source: ABS, 1995

Source: OECD, 2016

Strategic Intent

"Creating a brighter future for life in the tropics world-wide through graduates and discoveries that make a difference"

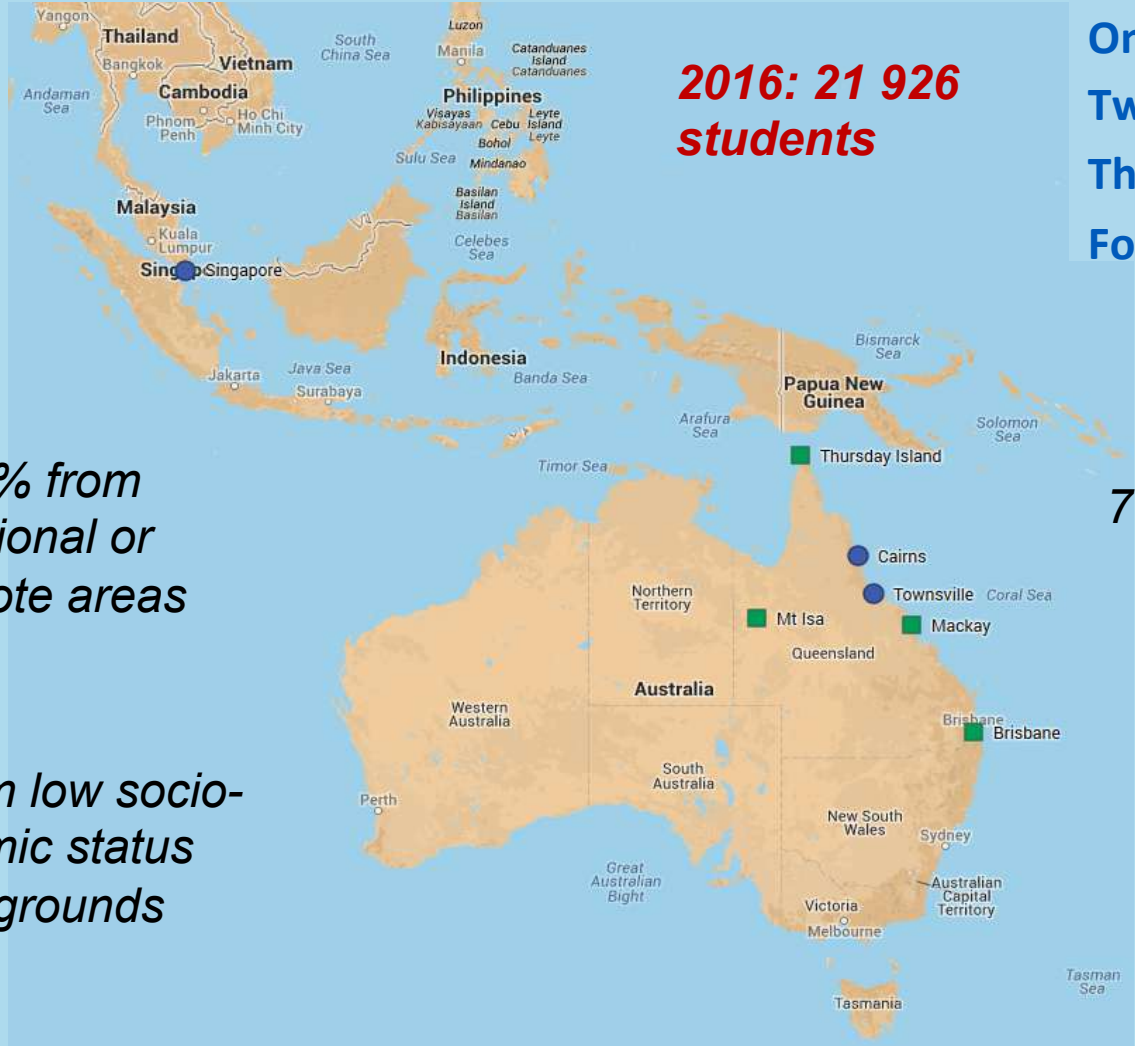
One University

Two Countries

Three Tropical Campuses

Four Study Centres

2016: 21 926 students



22% from regional or remote areas

70% first-in-family

23% from low socio-economic status backgrounds

5.3% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

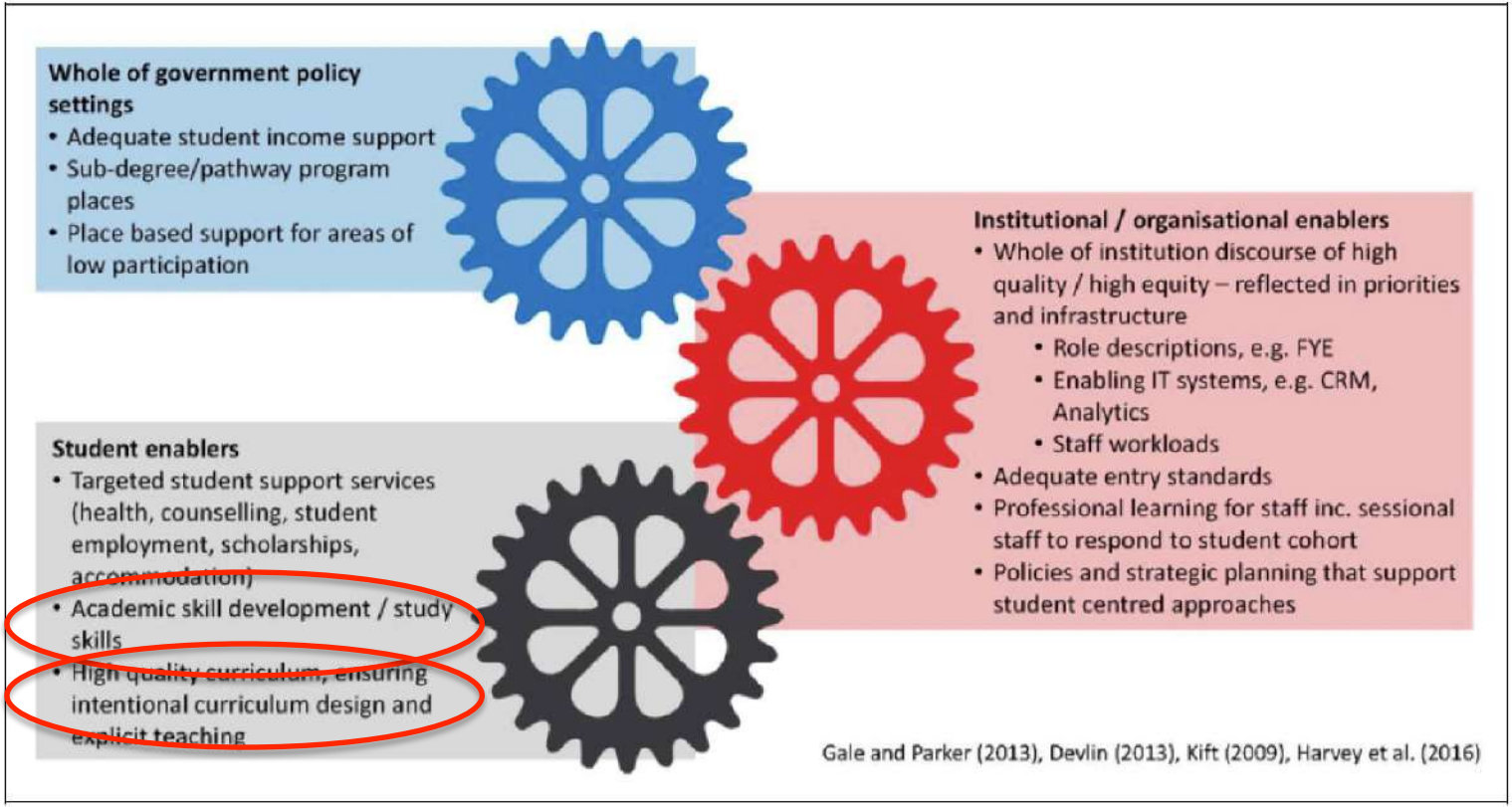
Foundations of a (re)focused approach

Tinto (2009, p. 10) observes that student success

"…does not arise by chance.

It is the result of an **intentional**, **structured**, and **proactive** set of strategies that are coherent and systematic in nature and carefully aligned to the same goal".

Retention as ‘everybody’s business’



The JCU Learning Centre

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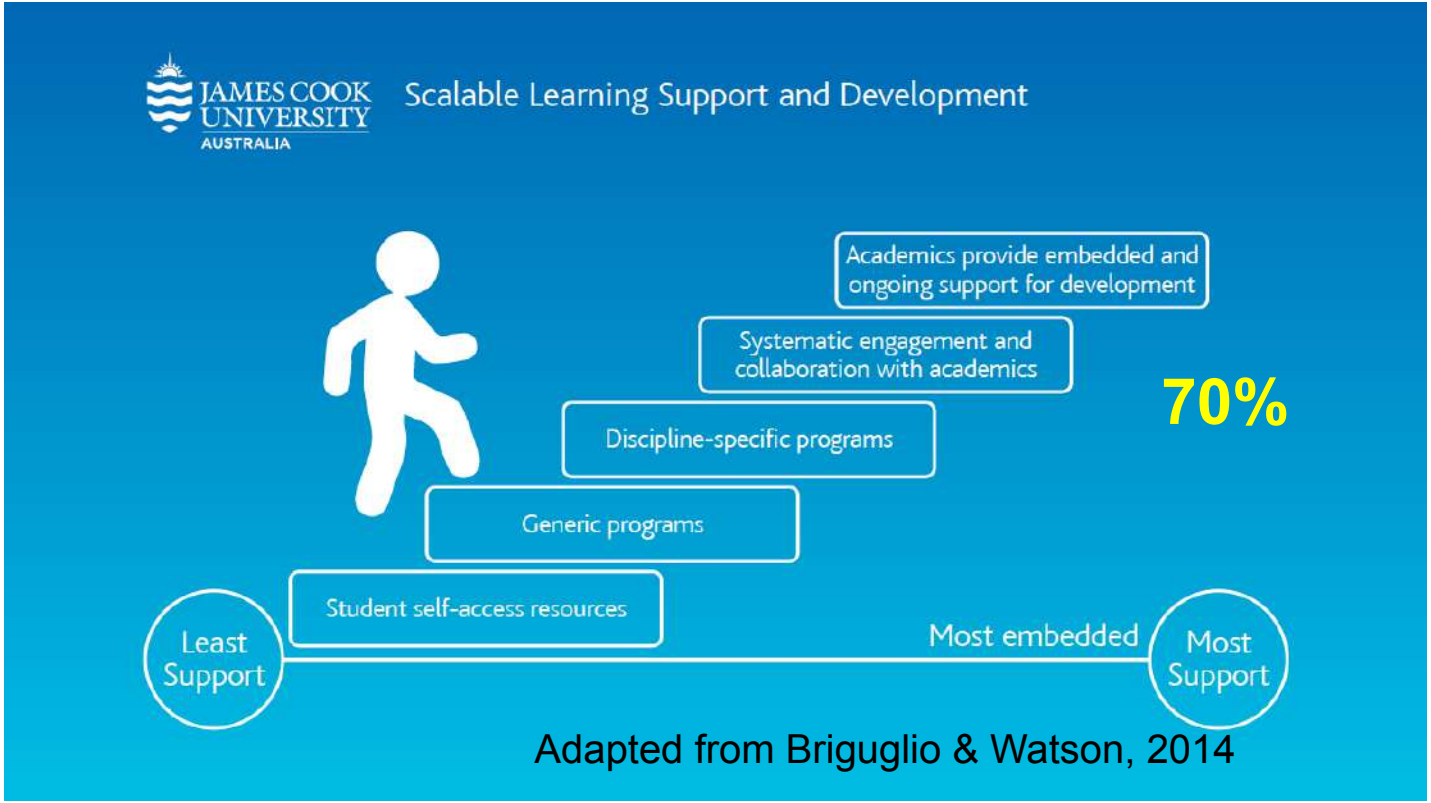
TheLearningCentre

UNLOCK YOUR POTENTIAL

AUSTRALIAN AWARDS for University Teaching

WINNER

2016 Award for Programs that Enhance Learning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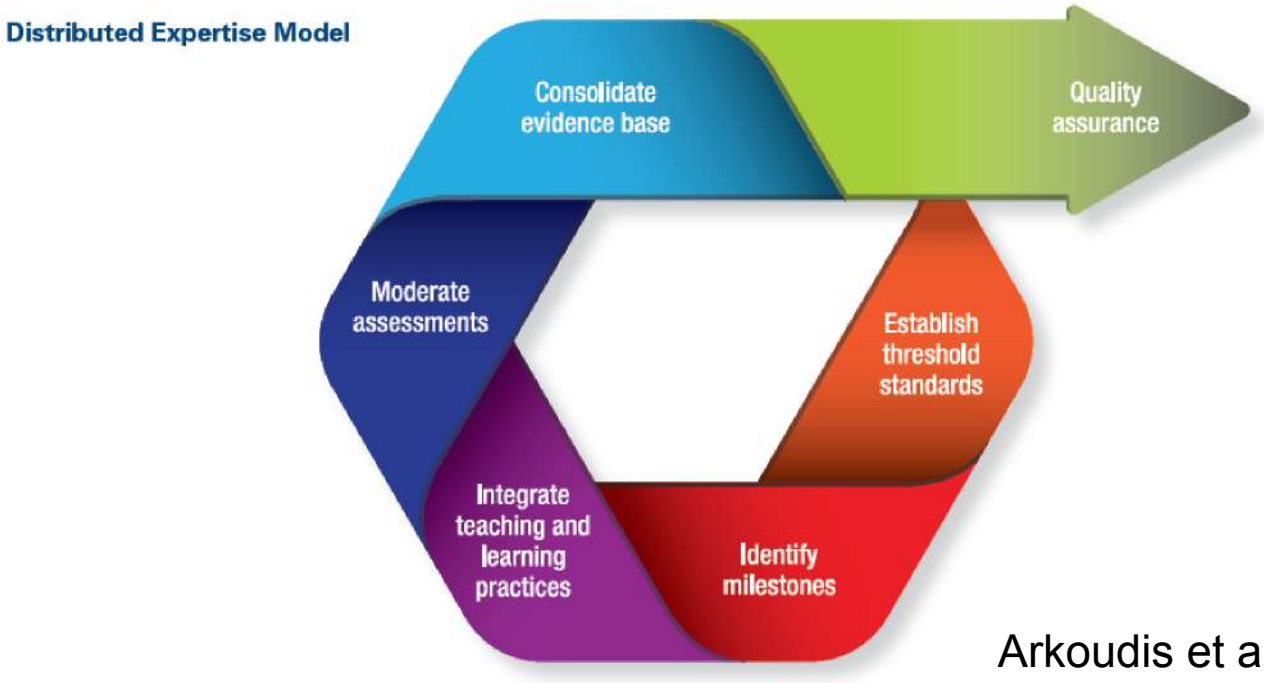
Scalable Learning Support and Development
Academics provide embedded and ongoing support for development
Systematic engagement and collaboration with academics
Discipline-specific programs
Generic programs
Student self-access resources
70%
Least Support
Most embedded
Most Support
Adapted from Briguglio & Watson, 2014

High impact approach to developing graduate communication skills



Arkoudis et al, 2017

Generic learning support and development

TheLearningCentre
UNLOCK YOUR POTENTIAL

Cairns Campus
Monday – Friday
10am - 3pm

Townsville Campus
Monday – Friday
10am - 4pm

yourtutor

Online via LMS (VLE)
Sunday - Friday
3pm - midnight

JCU's purpose for engaging YourTutor

- Equitable access to learning support in foundational concepts for internal and external students
- Timely access to learning support
- Recognition of JCU's demographic profile
  - open access pre-degree
  - undergraduate entry requirements
- Retention strategy
- Regulatory considerations
- Complement existing generic services and support high impact actions

Implementation Strategy

- YourTutor provided to first level subjects
  - Diploma of Higher Education
  - Bachelor first year: Business, Nursing, Education, Engineering
- Access via Blackboard learning management system only
- Communication focused on staff (and staff-students)
  - Academics and teaching staff
  - Student support officers
  - Student services
  - Mentors
  - PASS
- Information made available to students in orientation activities

Evaluation Strategy

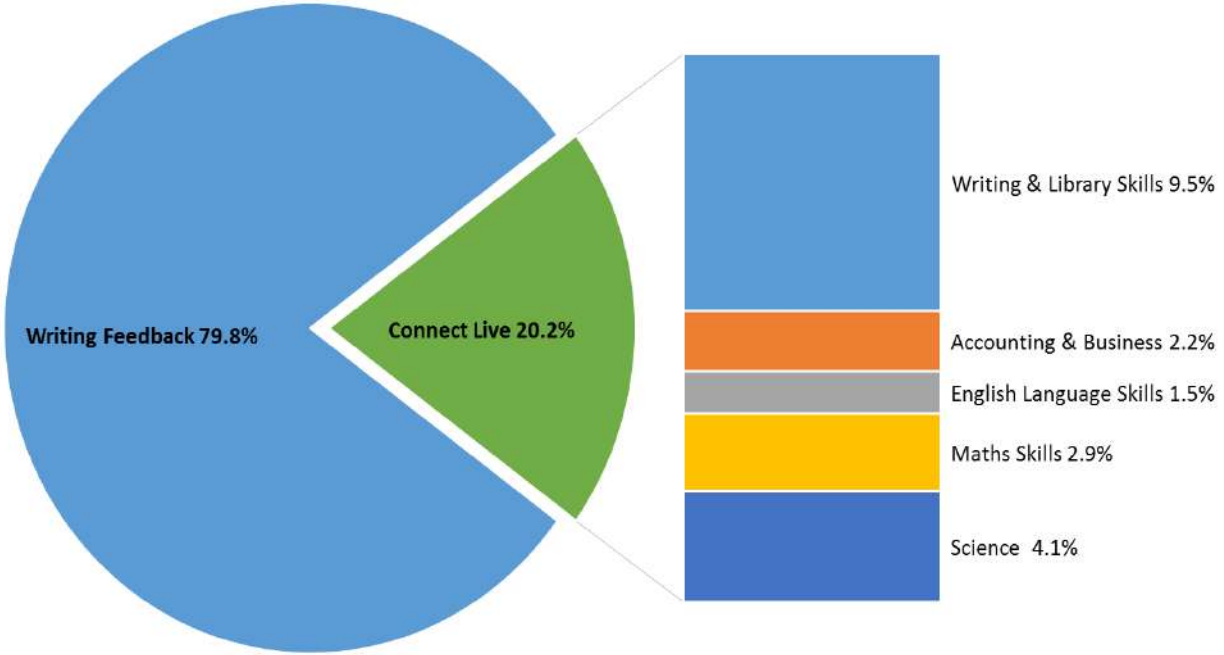
- Regular monitoring of use data
  - Intervention for students ‘overusing’
  - Setting of ‘caps’ in semester 2
  - Reports of poor, inconsistent or inappropriate feedback
- Audience engagement
- Program impact
  - student experience at JCU
  - student success
- Implementation

Data Sources

- **Your Tutor**
  - Use data
  - Transcripts
  - Satisfaction survey data
- **Institutional data**
  - Student demographics
  - Grades
- **Ad hoc**
  - Student survey

Usage by first year undergraduate students

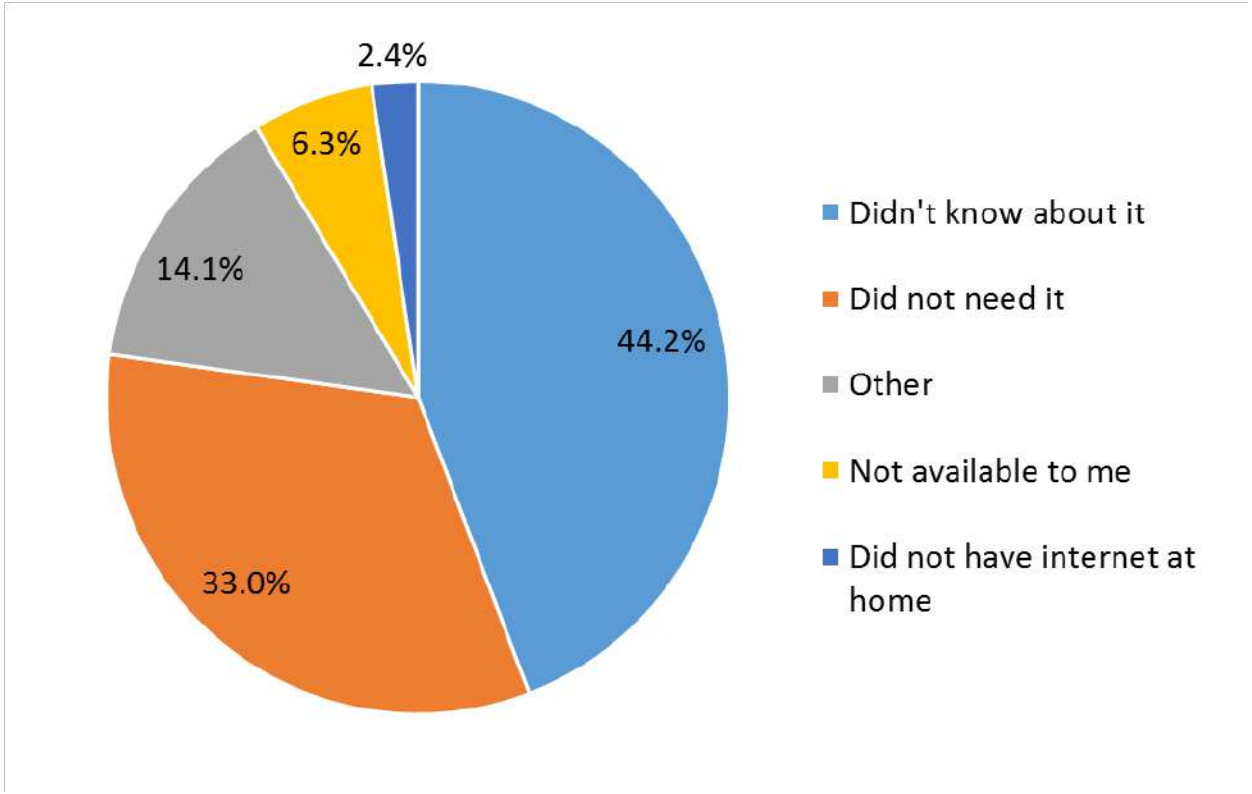
- 1384 (22.9%)
- 4529 sessions



How did students hear about YourTutor?

Source	N (%)
Academic Staff	73.6%
LearnJCU (LMS)	47.8%
Other Students	30.8%
Email	24.2%

Why not use YourTutor?



Who uses YourTutor?

Disproportionately higher engagement:	Disproportionately lower engagement:
0-19 year old students	20-24 year old students
Females	Males
Commencing students	Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander students
Cairns based students	Townsville based students
Students studying Business, Education and Social Sciences	Students studying Engineering, Information Technology, Medicine and Science
Students studying fulltime	Students studying a bachelor with honours
Students studying the Diploma of Higher Education	Students studying in internal mode.
Students studying in external mode.	

What do we know about our YourTutor users?

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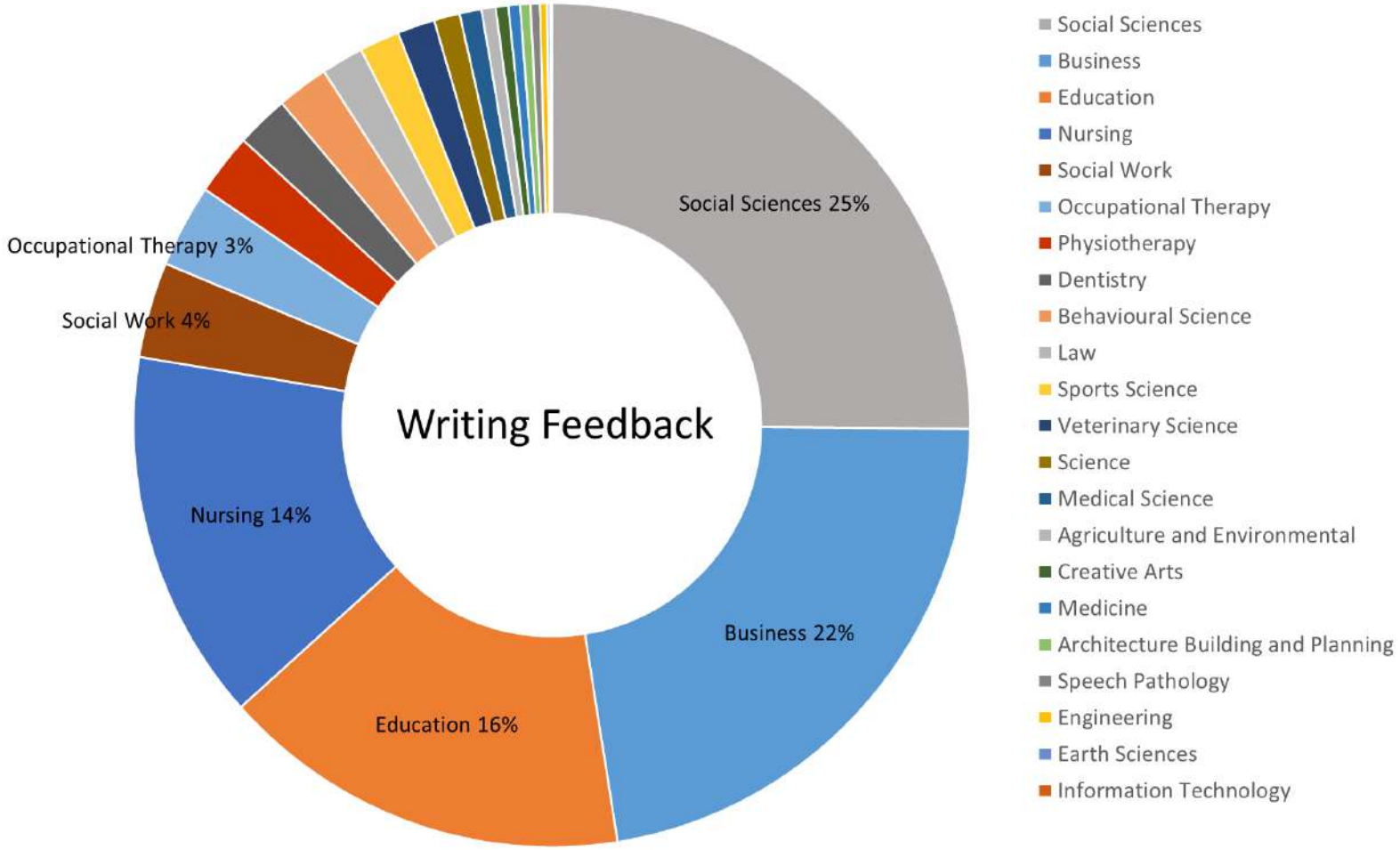
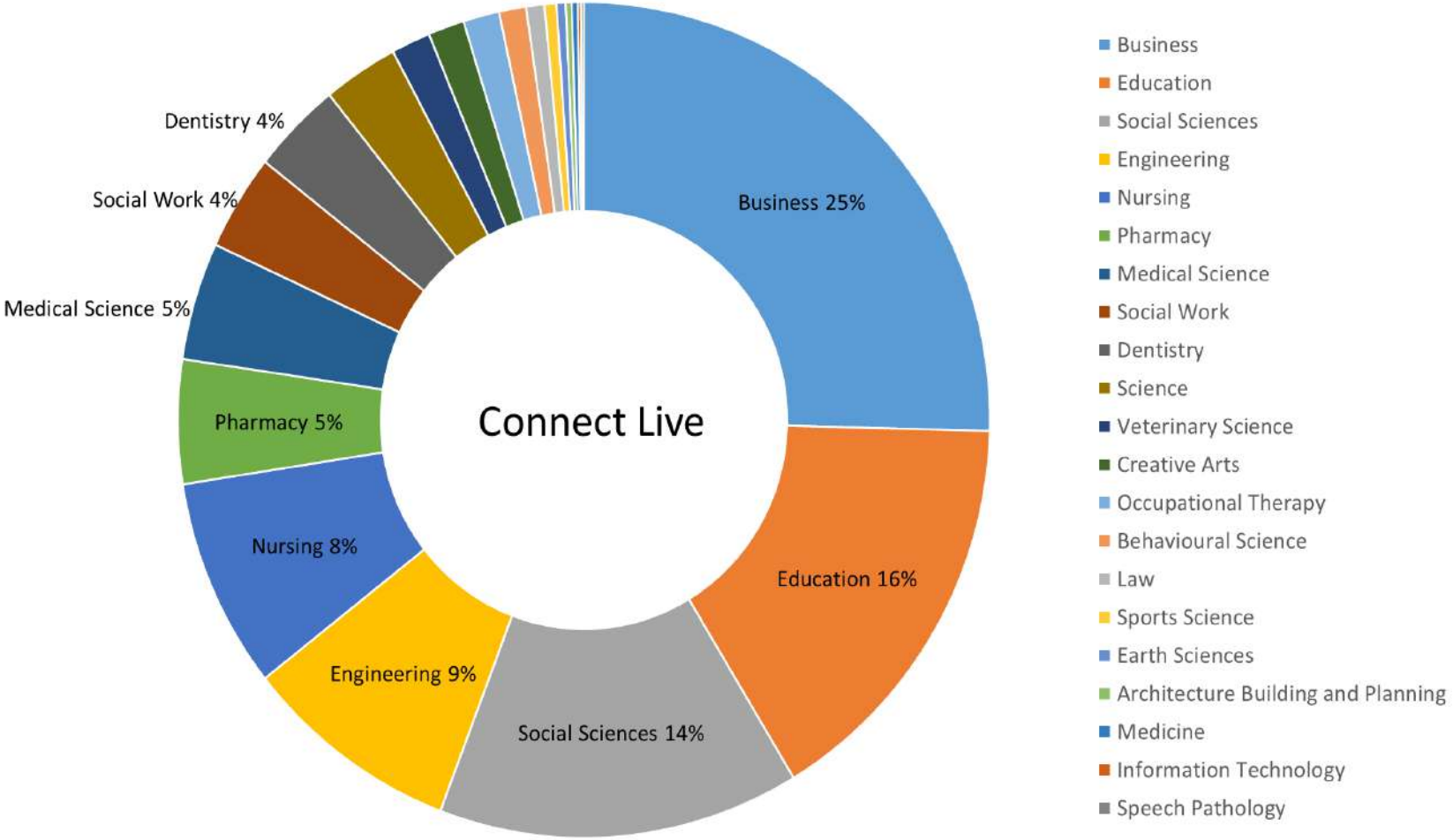
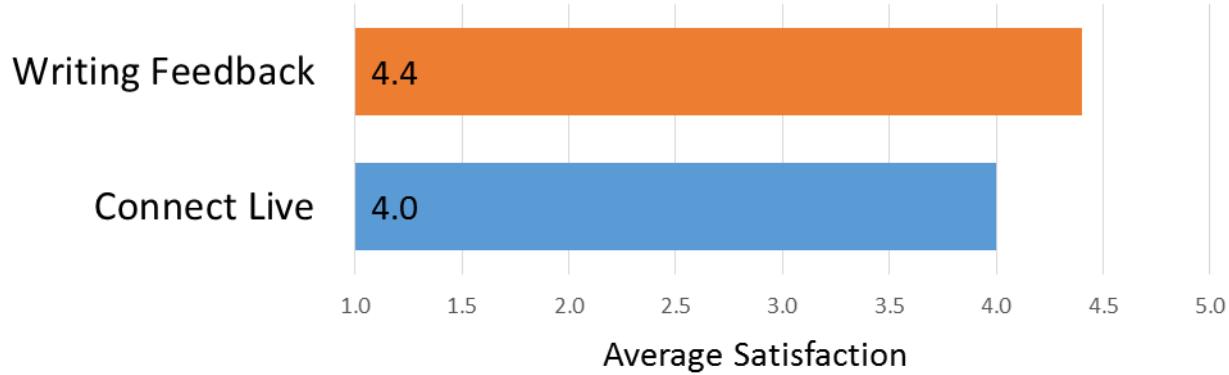
They are help seekers

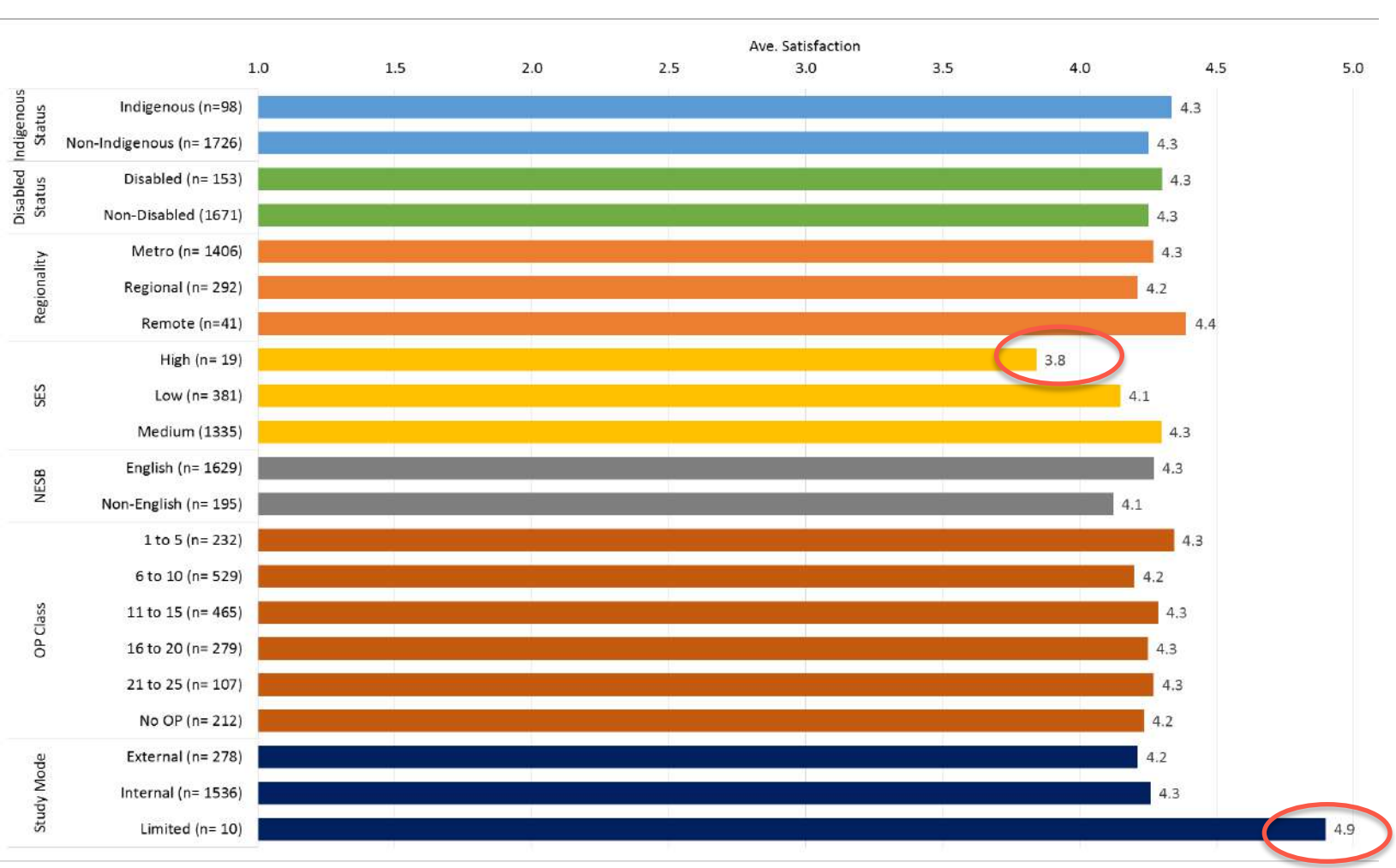
- 72% of those students who engaged in YourTutor participated in at least one other student support program at JCU
  - 30% accessing YourTutor plus one other program
  - 21% accessing YourTutor plus two other programs
  - 21% accessing YourTutor plus 3 to 9 other programs.
- 28% of those students who engaged with YourTutor did not appear to engage with any other student support program

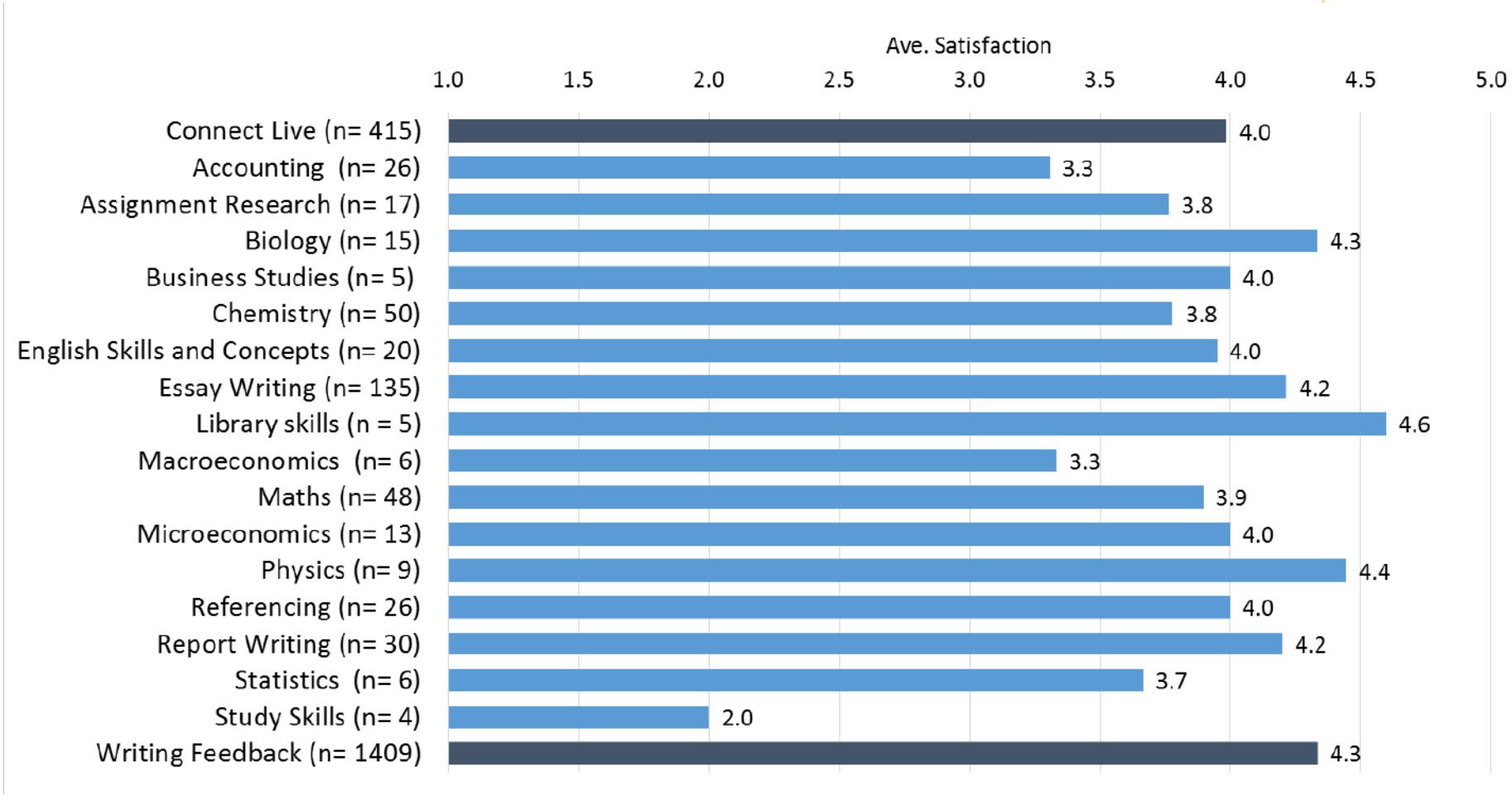

Writing Feedback
Social Sciences 25%
Business 22%
Education 16%
Nursing 14%
Social Work 4%
Occupational Therapy 3%
Social Sciences
Business
Education
Nursing
Social Work
Occupational Therapy
Physiotherapy
Dentistry
Behavioural Science
Law
Sports Science
Veterinary Science
Science
Medical Science
Agriculture and Environmental
Creative Arts
Medicine
Architecture Building and Planning
Speech Pathology
Engineering
Earth Sciences
Information Technology


Connect Live
Business 25%
Education 16%
Social Sciences 14%
Engineering 9%
Nursing 8%
Pharmacy 5%
Medical Science 5%
Social Work 4%
Dentistry 4%
Business
Education
Social Sciences
Engineering
Nursing
Pharmacy
Medical Science
Social Work
Dentistry
Science
Veterinary Science
Creative Arts
Occupational Therapy
Behavioural Science
Law
Sports Science
Earth Sciences
Architecture Building and Planning
Medicine
Information Technology
Speech Pathology

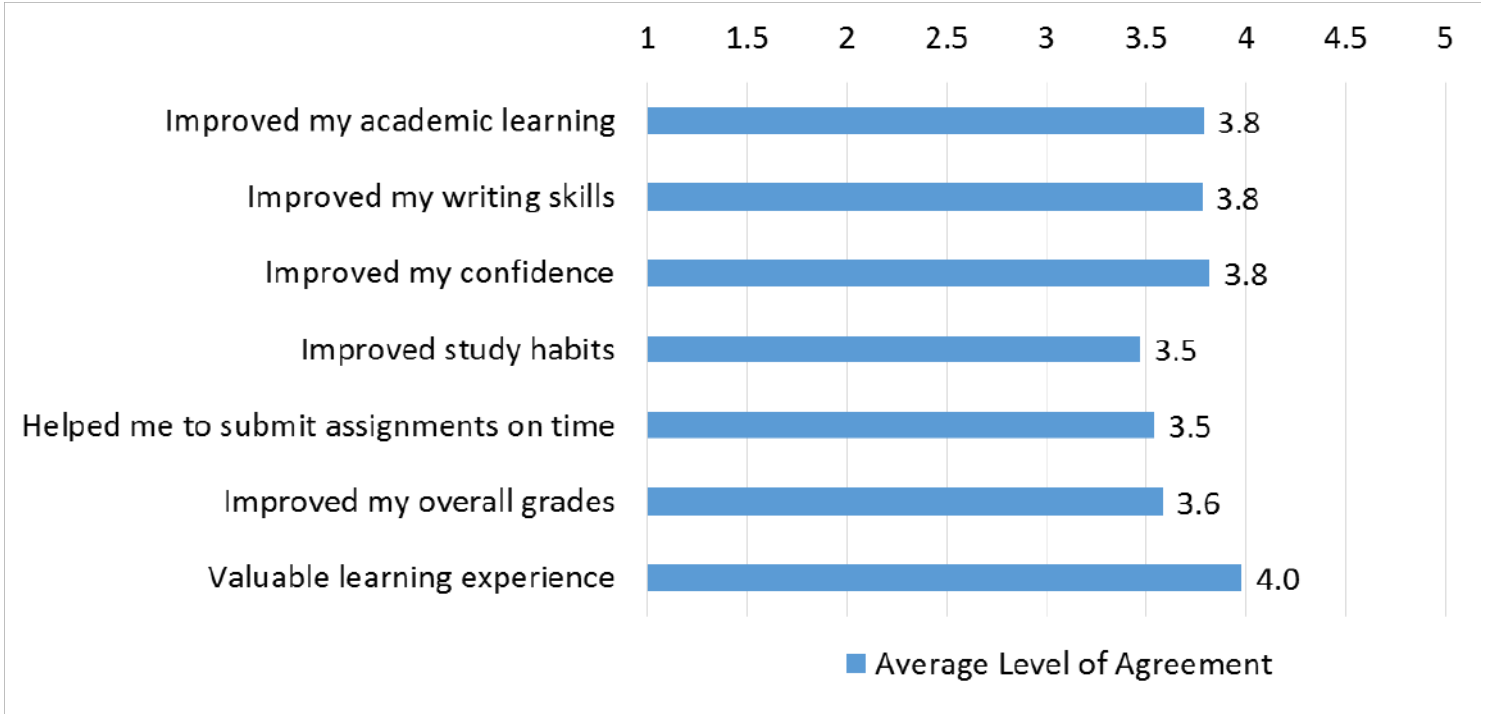
Satisfaction (YourTutor survey)



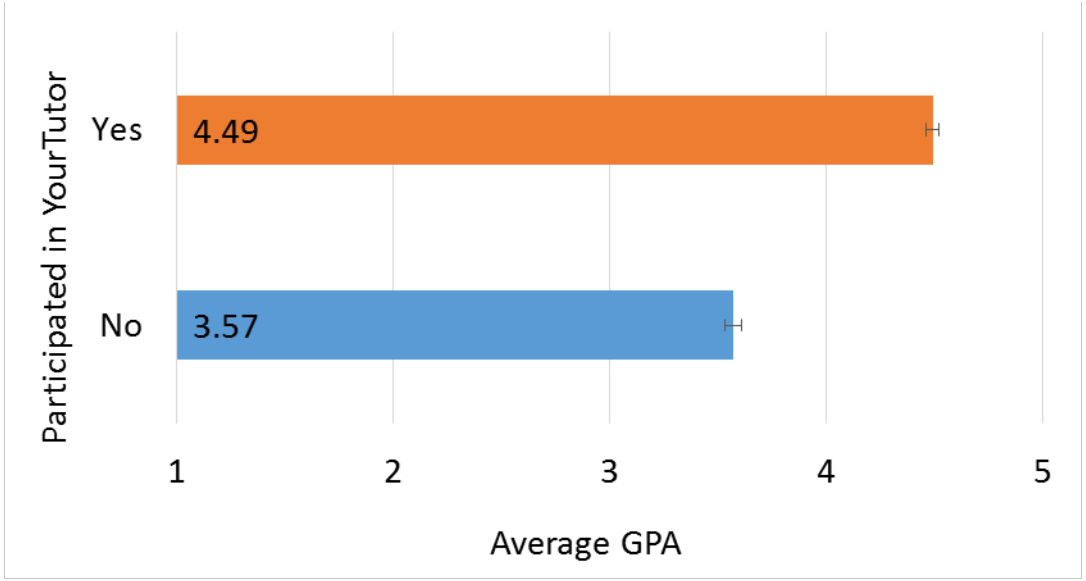

Ave. Satisfaction
1.0
1.5
2.0
2.5
3.0
3.5
4.0
4.5
5.0
Indigenous Status
Indigenous (n=98)
4.3
Non-Indigenous (n= 1726)
4.3
Disabled Status
Disabled (n= 153)
4.3
Non-Disabled (1671)
4.3
Regionality
Metro (n= 1406)
4.3
Regional (n= 292)
4.2
Remote (n=41)
4.4
SES
High (n= 19)
3.8
Low (n= 381)
4.1
Medium (1335)
4.3
NESB
English (n= 1629)
4.3
Non-English (n= 195)
4.1
OP Class
1 to 5 (n= 232)
4.3
6 to 10 (n= 529)
4.2
11 to 15 (n= 465)
4.3
16 to 20 (n= 279)
4.3
21 to 25 (n= 107)
4.3
No OP (n= 212)
4.2
Study Mode
External (n= 278)
4.2
Internal (n= 1536)
4.3
Limited (n= 10)
4.9


Ave. Satisfaction
1.0
1.5
2.0
2.5
3.0
3.5
4.0
4.5
5.0
Connect Live (n= 415)
4.0
Accounting (n= 26)
3.3
Assignment Research (n= 17)
3.8
Biology (n= 15)
4.3
Business Studies (n= 5)
4.0
Chemistry (n= 50)
3.8
English Skills and Concepts (n= 20)
4.0
Essay Writing (n= 135)
4.2
Library skills (n = 5)
4.6
Macroeconomics (n= 6)
3.3
Maths (n= 48)
3.9
Microeconomics (n= 13)
4.0
Physics (n= 9)
4.4
Referencing (n= 26)
4.0
Report Writing (n= 30)
4.2
Statistics (n= 6)
3.7
Study Skills (n= 4)
2.0
Writing Feedback (n= 1409)
4.3

Student perceptions of impact on learning



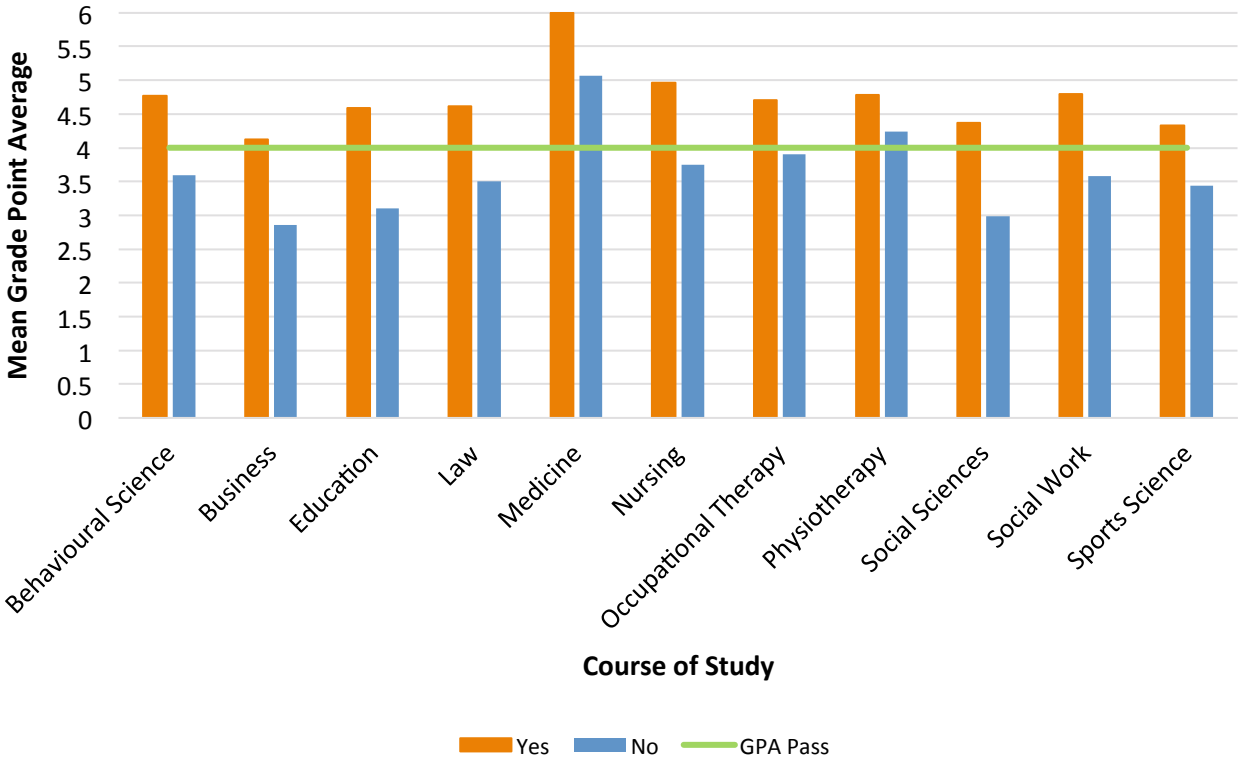
Achievement



Are the impacts different for different sub-groups?

- Gender
- Ethnicity
- OP Class
- Mode of delivery
- Course category – except Bachelor with Honours and Graduate Bachelor

GPA by course of study



Did more tutorials mean better results?

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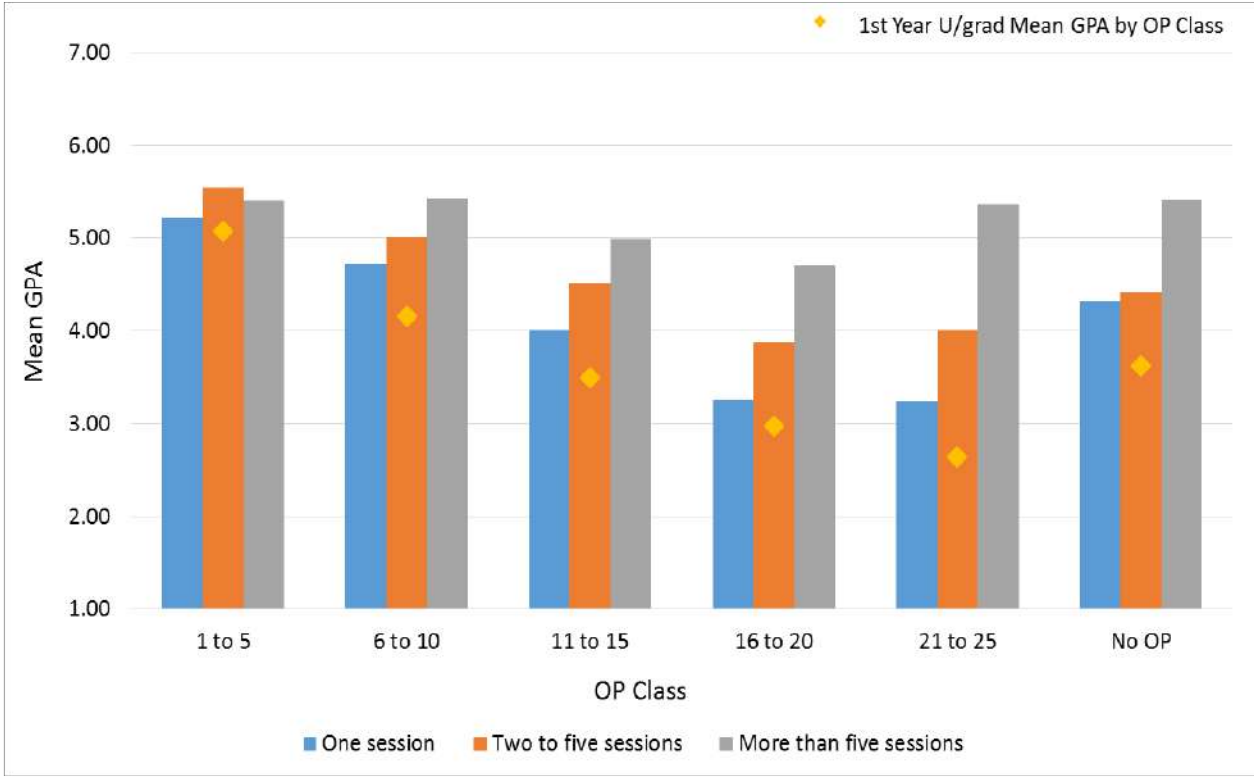
Connect Live

Quartile (minutes)	n	GPA (M, SD)
Q1 (<13)	65	4.4 (1.7)
Q2 (13 – 26)	62	4.5 (1.7)
Q3 (27 – 58)	64	4.4 (1.5)
Q4 (>58)	63	4.4 (4.4)

Writing Feedback

Number of Submissions	n	GPA (M, SD)
One (low)	580	4.2 (1.7)
Two to five (medium)	570	4.7 (1.3)
More than five (high)	129	5.2 (.9)

Writing feedback



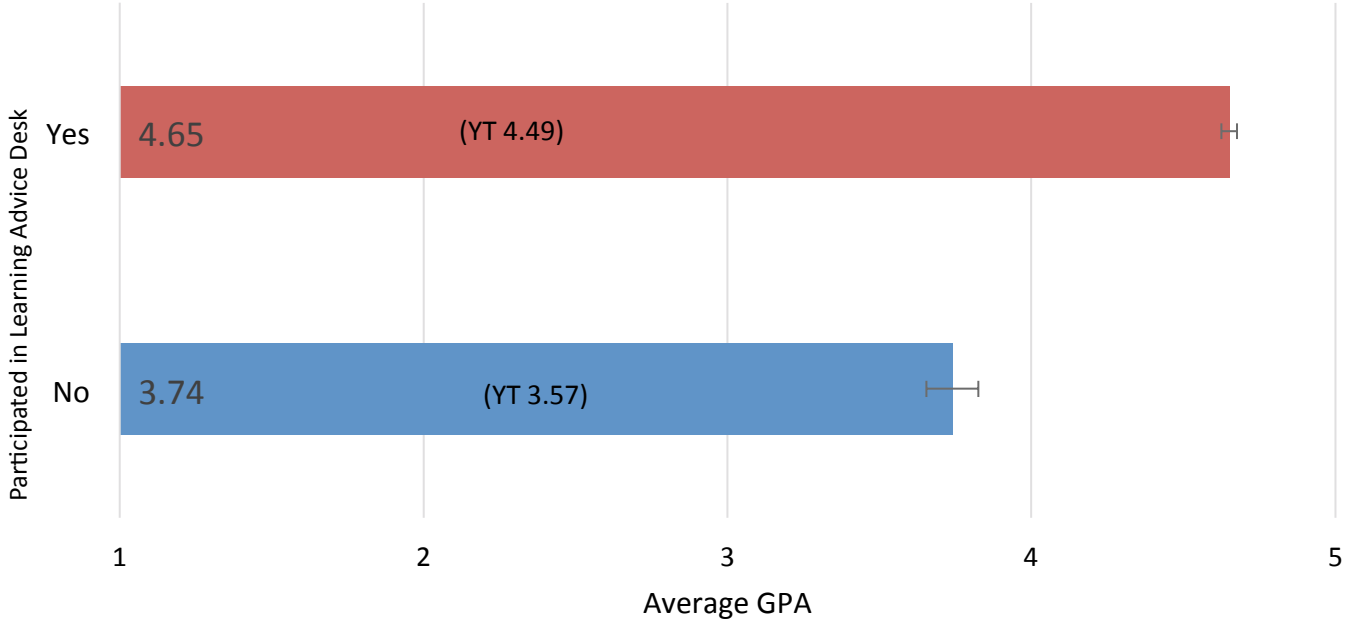
Compared to the Learning Advice Desk?

Learning Advice Desk	# students
2015	1434
2016	1483

Your Tutor
1384

~32% also used YourTutor

Learning Advice Desk: Achievement



Questions generated

- How do we reach the 75%?
- How do we better understand (and exploit) the motivations for help seeking?
- What are the implications for high use of writing feedback?
  - Is it a Queensland thing?
  - Confidence building?
  - Assist in supporting curriculum interventions?
  - Quality feedback from academics more likely?
- Transferability?
- Moving students from technically accurate writer to discipline expert

What is ‘in it’ for JCU?

- A targeted equity strategy to address retention
- Providing support at scale in peak periods
- Regulatory compliance
- Positive customer experience
  - Strong support for implementation
  - Prompt response to issues of poor quality feedback
  - Transparency of data
  - Flexibility in applying caps (on and off)

Take home messages

- Complementary generic support program
  - Extends the ‘reach’ of existing services
  - Potentially improves student success
  - Value adds to a supportive learning environment
  - Supports normalising help seeking
- Not a ‘set and forget’ solution
- Addresses foundational knowledge

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Thank you

Questions?

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Singapore
Townsville