

Arc's 2025 Outcomes

2025 was a landmark year of delivery, growth and impact for Arc. Across the year, Arc significantly expanded student-facing activity, investing more than ever before in programs, services, cost-of-living support, student engagement and campus activation to create the best student experience at UNSW.

A major area of growth, and ultimately a central focus of Arc's new 2026–2028 Strategy, was cost-of-living support. In response to increasing student need, Arc launched seven new cost-of-living initiatives, providing expanded practical support for students experiencing financial pressure, including new services such as Financial Counselling and the Borrowing Centre. At the same time, Arc strengthened and expanded its existing essential support services. Food Hub welcomed 54,746 student visits across the year, while significantly broadening its offering through expanded food ranges and the introduction of personal hygiene essentials. Check Point also expanded its free breakfast program to four days per week, distributing more than 25,000 free food serves to students.

Arc's core services and student engagement initiatives also experienced substantial growth. Across 2025, Arc delivered 23 volunteer programs, engaging 2,780 volunteers who contributed 75,146 hours in support of students and the broader community. O-Week saw 76,313 student engagements across six days of campus activation, helping students connect, transition and thrive at key moments in their university journey. Arc also continued to support one of the most active student communities in the country, growing and supporting 422 Clubs to maintain Australia's largest university Clubs program. This included a substantial increase in Club funding, the rollout of a new Clubs Management System, and the launch of Arc Development Community Grants to further empower Clubs and strengthen the wider campus community.

Financially, Arc's 2025 result included a higher-than-anticipated surplus. This was a positive outcome, reflecting both responsible financial stewardship and an exceptional year of activity, not any reduction in Arc's commitment to students. As a not-for-profit organisation, every dollar Arc receives is directed back into delivering impact and enhancing student life.

The 2025 Budget was developed during a period of considerable uncertainty. Arc's SSAF funding from UNSW is linked to student enrolments, and early projections indicated potential funding reductions from 2026. In response, Arc adopted a deliberate and disciplined approach to ensure that new and expanded initiatives introduced in 2025 could be sustained responsibly over the long term. This approach prioritised meaningful, lasting impact over short-term expansion.

Throughout the year, however, several positive factors strengthened Arc's financial position. Commercial operations performed strongly, generating additional revenue that was and will continue to be reinvested into student programs and expanded services. At the same time, anticipated declines in international student enrolments did not materialise to the extent forecast, resulting in higher-than-expected SSAF funding as the year progressed.

A final SSAF reconciliation in November confirmed an additional \$660,000 in funding, following earlier positive revenue adjustments. Due to the timing, it was not practical to deploy these funds in the final weeks of the year in a way that would provide meaningful or sustainable student benefit. Consistent with Arc's strategic approach, these funds were not diverted into rushed or low-impact initiatives.

The financial result was also influenced by the timing of major capital and service expansion projects. Arc had planned significant investments in student infrastructure, including the relocation and expansion of Food Hub into a broader Basic Needs service, alongside new initiatives such as a subsidised on-campus Canteen. These remain exciting priorities, and Arc looks forward to progressing them once space arrangements with UNSW are finalised.

Importantly, the 2025 outcome has further strengthened Arc's ability to invest even more into students. Arc has adopted planned deficit budgets for 2026 and 2027, enabling substantial further expansion of cost-of-living support, student services and strategic initiatives.

Overall, 2025 was a year defined by growth, innovation and impact. Arc's financial result reflects a strong balance between record levels of student investment, responsible stewardship and long-term sustainability. Arc remains firmly committed to ensuring that every dollar, including any surplus, is reinvested into initiatives that meaningfully enhance the student experience at UNSW, both now and into the future.