



Green Gown Awards
Australasia

Student Engagement

2020 Case Study



MONASH
University

Monash BorrowCup

BorrowCup's vision is to 'Get rid of disposable coffee cups and make the campus more sustainable'.

The project started in 2018 with a trial at one café. The idea was to offer free reusable coffee cups for takeaway coffees. This was to complement the existing use of BYO cups that approximately 25% of coffee drinkers were already using. By the start of 2020, BorrowCup was operating in 9 campus cafés, with 1400 reusable coffee cups being used per week on average.

How it works: A customer, who doesn't have their own reusable cup, asks for their takeaway coffee in a BorrowCup. The participating café makes customer's coffee in BorrowCup, gives it to the customer who then drinks their takeaway coffee and when finished returns the empty, used cup to one of the many return bins specifically designed for BorrowCup found across campus. The 50 return bins are emptied once a day and used cups are brought to a dishwasher facility where a paid team of students wash the cups, and redistributes clean, dry cups back to cafés.

While the initiative is built on providing reusable coffee cups to cafés it has become something much bigger than that and provides a platform for students to gain new skills, put into practice knowledge learnt through coursework, and an opportunity to meet

students and staff from across different disciplines and areas of the university.

The opportunity to expand operations to more campus cafes in 2020 was halted due to COVID-19 but this hasn't stopped the BorrowCup team from realising its vision to make the campus more sustainable. The **structure**, with a combination of students and staff (academic and professional), allows for responsibilities and initiatives to be diverse and shared across the team.

The future of BorrowCup has focused on how the team can add value to other sustainability initiatives that students can be a part of on campus. A 'playbook' as such has been created that gives other students access to the resources and networks that BorrowCup have formed in the three years since inception. This is helping to accelerate student ideas to trials and new initiatives in a quicker time frame.

BorrowCup is used as a casestudy to promote student leadership on campus and has featured in the Leap into **Leadership** program and the Engineering Leadership program on how to be an innovator while being an Engineering student. Exchange students, who were team members, have taken the BorrowCup

concept back to their university and launched **Warwick Cup**. BorrowCup has also been used for students' coursework requirements with Final Year Projects in Engineering doing a full Life Cycle Analysis of BorrowCup operations and comparing it to the use of single-use disposable coffee cups.

Through purposeful consideration the BorrowCup team has ensured that it will survive the COVID-19 pandemic and allow students to emerge as active participants and leaders in the Green Recovery we need.

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Environmental & Social Benefits

Allowing BorrowCup to be a student-led project has provided an innovative outlet for students on campus keen to get their hands dirty with a real sustainability challenge for our university, while also addressing a wider society issue of waste generation and our reliance on single-use plastic packaging. Can we create a model of circularity on campus? The small campus sustainability staff team have essentially outsourced the project work to students who have the capacity and enthusiasm to drive the program to the success it has earned.

There are 30 coffee selling retailers on the Clayton campus where BorrowCup operates, all of them have shown interest and requested for BorrowCups to be served in their business. The limiting factor is ensuring the team are learning and adapting the program to improve its environmental and operational performance.

BorrowCup is addressing a waste issue but it is fundamentally a behaviour change problem. Early on the questions were asked: Will our BorrowCup system be more sustainable than single-use cups? Why do/don't people want to use a reusable cup? How do we make the

operations financially/environmentally/socially sustainable? The team sought out academic experts to help them answer these questions, which led to the creation of the **Board of mentors**. The structure of the BorrowCup team reflects the team's analysis of the problem and the questions that need to be answered for success to occur. The sub-teams within BorrowCup

meet regularly to ensure they are progressing their ideas and answering the challenge. Where a more concerted effort is required for a challenge the addition of interns

and other coursework integration opportunities have been sought.

The benefits of BorrowCup are greater than just removing disposable coffee cups. The social connections it has created across such a large organisation as Monash

University is almost immeasurable but the outcome of this is a desire to do more and give opportunities to more students to be involved in other campus sustainability projects that will ensure the impact will grow beyond the initial project.

Leadership & Engagement

BorrowCup has provided students a real tangible sustainability challenge to answer. Our campus acts as a living laboratory and allows students to develop and implement strategies based on analysis and experience. The program is dynamic and offers a wide range of opportunities for students to be involved. Opportunities range from:

- | Taking on leadership positions for the sub-teams of BorrowCup
- | Being a team member of one of the sub-teams. A key success of the program has been in engaging students from different disciplines, which has led to the interdisciplinary nature of the sub-teams formed.
- | Attending events organised (3 events per semester) to learn about sustainability in a fun and accessible environment
- | Being a BorrowCup Ambassador, for students and staff who want to support BorrowCup in a less committed manner, such as academics that promote BorrowCup in their coursework and students who volunteer at events. Ambassadors make BorrowCup accessible and relatable to everyone. Intentionally, this role is open for both staff and students.

Launch parties are held at each cafe to bring everyone together to celebrate positive sustainability outcomes at Monash and to engage all community members in a conversation around sustainability. The social aspect of BorrowCup is encouraged and having a coffee (in a BorrowCup) is a central to creating these opportunities to mix with different disciplines and areas.

The BorrowCup team have paved the way for other students to launch other sustainability initiatives on campus through the creation of the playbook of all the resources and networks available on campus.

Wider Societal Impact

BorrowCup has provided students the opportunities to gain new practical skills in leadership, stakeholder engagement, logistics and operations management, marketing and communications, to name a few. These skills often complement the theoretical knowledge they learn in their coursework at university. While BorrowCup started with the simple aim of creating a reusable coffee cup scheme it has grown to be much more than that. The community created brings students and staff from all disciplines and areas of the university together for a common cause with a positive outcome.

An example is a recent graduate from Monash who used the BorrowCup scheme on campus, as a coffee drinker, later contacted the Monash BorrowCup team asking for guidance on how to launch a similar program at the large corporation she was now working at after graduating. In this way, many more Australians will be impacted outside of the University when graduates share their experiences.

Students from all disciplines are involved in the team, making sustainability accessible to people from all different backgrounds, such as law, IT, science, arts, business, engineering and design. Therefore, when students leave campus and enter all different industries they have the skills to engage in making their organisations and work more sustainable.

Skills development is an area of focus for the team and time is spent identifying what skills students need or want to learn or gain experience in for their chosen career path. There is a focus on collaboration with other student groups/teams/clubs on campus who have similar sustainability visions, such as Precious Plastic Monash. This cross pollination of ideas will greatly enable students to contribute to the post-covid green recovery.

Top 3 Learnings

Student involvement in answering the sustainability challenges of the university lends itself to student empowerment and leadership

There are many opportunities to harness student enthusiasm and their desire to do something meaningful at university in addition to their formal studies

The student voice is powerful. Collectively, students can drive positive action for sustainability across the campus and take the experience with them into their futures