

TOP PROFESSIONAL VOICES IN STUDENT ENGAGEMENT



JESSICA BRAZEL

**Student Living Support Coordinator
The University of Newcastle**

Jessica Brazel is a Support Coordinator at the University of Newcastle, where she designs leadership and wellbeing programs that help students grow in confidence, connection, and purpose. Drawing on her studies in positive psychology, she's passionate about investing in young adults and mentoring them through the challenges and growth of university life.



www.linkedin.com/in/jessica-schuhmachernz

What motivates you to continue working in student engagement?

What keeps me motivated is seeing the ripple effect of genuine connection. One conversation, moment of support, or chance to lead can completely shift a student's confidence and sense of belonging. I'm passionate about how leadership and wellbeing go hand in hand, and through my studies in positive psychology, I've seen how powerful it is when we lead with authenticity, compassion, and care. When students feel safe and valued, they don't just succeed academically—they grow into confident, capable humans who know they belong.

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Group photo of a few of the residential mentors on a group walk on the beach.

“IT'S ALL ABOUT HELPING STUDENTS SEE UNIVERSITY AS MORE THAN A DEGREE—IT'S A PLACE TO GROW, CONNECT, AND FIND BELONGING.”

Can you share some examples of how your work has positively influenced the lives of university students and enhanced their overall experience?

For me, it's all about helping students see university as more than a degree—it's a place to grow, connect, and find belonging. Some of the most rewarding moments have come through our leadership programs, where students often say it was the highlight of their uni experience—a space where they built confidence, made lifelong friends, and developed skills that shaped their careers.

Some even come back years later to work with Student Living, which is the ultimate reminder of why this work matters. Whether it's through leadership, mentoring, or simple check-ins, seeing students believe in themselves and thrive is what makes it all worth it.



Staff photo from the Student Experience Network Conference, where Jessica was nominated for Newcomer of the Year and her Clubs Program was recognised as a finalist.



A Note from the Founder

Jess has leadership development for residential students in her blood! I loved being on campus this year and hope to be back with a room full of smiling residential leaders soon.



Favourite Quote I Live By

“People will forget what you said, they’ll forget what you did, but they’ll never forget how you made them feel.” – Maya Angelou

This quote perfectly captures my why. Whether I’m facilitating leadership training, designing programs, or simply being a sounding board for a student, I want every interaction to leave someone feeling seen, capable, and inspired.

I’m also guided by the work of Brené Brown and Kristin Neff, whose research into self-compassion and courageous leadership continues to shape how I show up. They remind me that strength and softness aren’t opposites—they’re both essential to meaningful leadership.

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Laser tag with our residential leaders after a full day of leadership training and connection.