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Orientation and transition programs for international students coming to Australia are key to fostering a supportive and empowering environment conducive to their academic achievement, career success, and human flourishing.

As part of its Semester 2 2023 Orientation program, International Student Support at the University of Adelaide successfully designed and implemented a first-of-its-kind, purpose-built, low-cost, Amazing Race-like game app and activity ("Fantastic Race"). Over 300 commencing international students took part in this innovative experience aimed at warmly welcoming them to the University and the City of Adelaide, and at building a sense of community and belonging from Day 1.

The Fantastic Race was designed leveraging the University's Microsoft 365 environment and Canva to develop the game app in an easy and data-secure way. The cumulative professional experience of the ISS team ensured a rich and relevant content, meeting higher-education standards.

Divided into randomised teams, participating students completed several challenges in which they explored the University campus and the City of Adelaide, while learning tips to facilitate their transition to university and life in Australia in a fun and friendship-building way. The Fantastic Race gameplay and prizes were all designed to encourage connection, conversation, and camaraderie before, during, and after the activity.

This presentation aims to illustrate the Fantastic Race's ideation, design, and implementation phases to highlight lessons learnt, as well as to share its blueprint, so that it might be replicated at other higher education institutions across Australia to support international students feeling at home in their new environment.

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