

LinkUp

When our team first met at MACATHON, we bonded over feeling lost at uni and all coming from different diverse backgrounds. Moving to Melbourne was exciting, but also isolating. Orientation felt awkward, events were overwhelming, and real friendships took time. We knew we weren't alone, so we set out to build the tool we all wish we had.

We created LinkUp, a hybrid app and Bluetooth card system that helps international students form meaningful connections in a casual, low-pressure way. Students sign up as mentors or mentees, enter their interests, background, and hobbies, and get matched with people who share similar vibes. Whether it's through music, language, or bubble tea, the focus is on real friendships. When nearby users activate their cards, you get a friendly nudge: 🧋 *"Yahye is down to grab coffee!"* - no awkward icebreakers needed.

Integrating chat functionality was a headache. Would we use Socket.io? But how would we integrate that into Java? We argued about how to make it work within the short time we had. Delegating tasks became chaotic, deciding which parts should be connected and what not. Creating our demo video felt like we were in a Hollywood editing and filming team, and the SolidWorks prototype of our Bluetooth card went through so many different iterations. But eventually, the adrenaline rush we got from working on this made it all worth it.

We're dreaming big! Firstly, we want to supercharge our chat function because who wouldn't want a fully functional, bug-free chatting system on a social app? We're adding NFC to work directly with student IDs (no more extra cards!). The real game-changer? Taking LinkUp beyond Monash to universities across Australia. Imagine thousands of students finding their tribes instantly, regardless of which uni they attend.

Our mission is simple: no student should feel alone in a new city. With LinkUp, you'd be finding your home away from home.