



# Students' Representative Council University of Sydney

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## MINUTES:

of the 3<sup>rd</sup> regular meeting of the 88<sup>th</sup> SRC held on Wednesday the 6<sup>th</sup> April. Meeting held in the Professorial Board Room, Quadrangle

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### A. Meeting open at 6:35 pm

#### A1. Election of Deputy Chairperson

The Chair moved that Lachlan Ward be elected Deputy Chairperson.  
The motion was put and **CARRIED.**

### B. Acknowledgement of Country

The University of Sydney Students' Representative Council acknowledges the traditional owners of this land (Sydney), the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. We stand on this land today as beneficiaries of an uncompensated and unreconciled dispossession that occurred over 200 years ago. Many of the descendants of those dispossessed live just down the road in abject poverty, and as young people it is important to recognise how this history of dislocation and disenfranchisement has contributed to the inequality we observe in modern society. We acknowledge both our privilege and our obligation to redress the situation as best we can: to remember the mistakes of the past, act on the problems of today, and build a future for everyone who now calls this place home, striving always for genuinely practical and meaningful reconciliation.

### C. Apologies, Proxies and Leaves of Absence

#### Apologies were received from:

Michael Sun  
Alice Strauss  
Dimitry Palmer  
Tian Ni Huang  
Dylan Griffiths  
Alexander Shu  
Vinil Kumar  
Liliana Tai

#### Proxies:

Dimitry Palmer to Alex Fitton  
Alexander Shu to Harry Gregg  
Vinil Kumar to Chloe Rafferty

Monique Newberry gave her apologies and made Cameron Caccamo her proxy at 7:12

Motion to accept the apologies and proxies.

Moved: Mathew Campbell

Seconded: Alex Fitton

The motion was put and **CARRIED.**

**D. Changes to Membership**

**E. Electoral Report**

**E1. Report of the Electoral Officer**

Cameron Caccamo: I haven't gone over this as carefully as I would like just yet beyond whether the recommendation was constitutional, I recommend we accept the report but not the recommendations till they have been examined closer.

Motion to accept the report of the electoral officer excluding part 9 recommendations.

Moved: Lachlan Ward

Seconded: Dylan Williams

The motion was put and **CARRIED.**

**F. Minutes of the previous Council meeting.**

Minutes of the meeting of 2nd regular meeting of the 88th SRC held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016 were circulated.

Motion: that the minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016 be accepted.

Moved: Dylan Williams

Seconded: Sam Kwon

The motion was put and **CARRIED.**

**G. Business Arising from the Minutes**

There was no business for this item.

**H. Question Time** of 15 minutes, which may be extended by resolution for a further 15 minutes.

**I. Visitor's Business**

There was no business for this item.

**J. Report of the Undergraduate Fellow of Senate**

Liam Garman read a report from the undergraduate fellow of senate:

Summary of Senate's actions as they are public: - University of Sydney's 2016-2020 strategic plan has been approved by senate. Three key planks to this: - Research; Triple investment in Research over the next five years Education: Transform our curriculum, including restructuring the undergraduate offering to allow for students to learn skills employers are seeking Culture: Building a culture of shared values. Some points of clarification that came up in Student Consultative Committee and would be of benefit for everyone to know: - The faculty restructure as confirmed by the VC in the Student Consultative Committee has already been confirmed by Senate in December Last year. - The SCA is, as far as I am aware currently not being moved to main campus. Some things of interest to students about what's happening now: - Official opening of the Nanoscience building is to happen middle of April - Official opening of the Oval No. 2 Grandstand is opening Tonight - Official opening of the Abercrombie Building will be middle of this year - Campus renewal is underway Things of contemporary concern: - I note the current issue with the USU's treatment of religious societies, specifically on multiple blogs, the Telegraph, front page of the Australian Saturday edition, on Sky News and on 2gb radio this week. Whilst this is the SRC, I want to note concern at the fact that this has not yet been resolved and implore the SRC in its capacity to assist in the resolution of this issue. Request: - As an ex officio member, I would like to be re-added to the mailing list for these meetings. - I would also like to request, as an ex officio member, for the annual reports of the SRC for the past five years.

Motion to reject the report and note that Dalton Fogarty is probably a scab

Moved: Lachlan Ward

Seconded: Eleanor Morley

The motion was put and **CARRIED.**

## **K. Elections**

### **K1. Election of 2 Intercampus Committee members**

There were no nominations

### **K2. Election of 1 Indigenous Officer**

A joint nomination from Jackson Newell and Luke Fetin has been received.

Georgia Mantle spoke to the nomination of Jackson Newell and Luke Fetin noting that the collective had endorsed their nomination

Jackson Newell and Luke Fetin were nominated by Georgia Mantle and Sam Kwon

Jackson Newell and Luke Fetin were jointly elected to the position of Indigenous Officer unopposed.

**L. Report of the President and Executive**

**L1. Executive Minutes**

Minutes of the Executive meetings from the 11<sup>th</sup> February to the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2016

Motion: that the minutes of the executive meetings from the 11<sup>th</sup> February to the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2016 be accepted.

Moved: Chloe Smith

Seconded: Lachlan Ward

The motion was put and **CARRIED.**

**L2. Report of the Executive**

Report of the executive from the 3<sup>rd</sup> March to the 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016

The report was circulated and noted.

*The President deferred the Chair to the Deputy Chairperson.*

**L3. President's Report**

Chloe Smith tabled a written report:

The SSAF process has concluded since my last report to council. Unfortunately, despite our best efforts, especially on behalf of the SRC, the six organisations were unable to come to an agreement on the allocation of the contestable pool. As of the last meeting we had on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, the total amounts that each organization was asking for amounted to around \$300,000 over the total amount available. As such, we referred the matter to the university for arbitration. We are expecting to hear back sometime this month and will update the council when we have a final amount. I also just want to thank my co-General Secretaries for all their hard work and support during this long process. It's safe to say that the SRC was certainly leading the pack when it came to making every effort to come to a collective agreement on SSAF, and it's unfortunate that some of the other organisations involved did not seem as enthusiastic about being cooperative, transparent, and operating in good faith.

The issue of simple extensions has also been resolved. The new policy was presented for discussion at the Academic Standards and Policy Committee meeting on March 9<sup>th</sup> and was approved for submission to Academic Board, where it was passed on March 30<sup>th</sup> without any debate. Whilst it's entirely possible the issue will be revisited in future, at this stage we

can count the continuing existence of simple extensions as a win for students. It's also good to see them expanded across all faculties.

At the Student Consultative Committee meeting on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, myself and other student reps were able to meet with the VC for the first time during my term. At this meeting, we raised issues including the safety of Muslim students on campus. We were informed that a person has been arrested for trashing the Muslim prayer room. We also raised the issue of the SUSF employment arrangements following on from Honi's expose that the university pays the salaries of two senior staff members whilst also allocating SUSF the lion's share of SSAF funding. Essentially, the VC's response amounted to this being an oversight and just the way it's always been done. There will be a governance review into SUSF later this year though it wasn't able to be confirmed that this will result in any changes to the current situation.

The University's 2016-2020 Strategic Plan has also been released. I will be discussing this in further detail with the Education Officers and other student representatives regarding some of the things mentioned. I am also looking to explore this further at the next SCC.

I have also been approached by the National Education Officer of NUS regarding the possibility of USyd hosting Education Conference this year. I have been in consultation with the co-General Secretaries and also spoken with the Education Officers about this, as well as with representatives from SUPRA and the USU. We have submitted a tender to host the conference and will wait to hear back.

Motion to accept the report of the President.

Moved: Sean Tingcombe

Seconded: Ilya Klauzner

The motion was put and **CARRIED**.

#### **M. Report of the Vice-Presidents**

Anna Hush-Egerton tabled a written report:

**Anonymous marking:** I attended a meeting of the Academic Standards and Policy Committee on 9 March, in which the anonymous marking submission written by myself and Subeta was discussed. The members of the committee were very positive about the policy, and all supported its implementation. The committee has now formed a working group to formulate the policy, and after it goes through Academic Board we should see anonymous marking implemented university-wide by the start of next year at the latest. It was great to see a campaign that we have put a lot of research and effort into come to fruition, and I am glad that the university is taking steps towards eliminating bias in marking practices. This

policy will predominantly benefit women and people with racialised names, as these groups are most affected by stereotypes in marking.

**Collectives reform:** after the success of anonymous marking, my next campaign will be to formalise collectives in the SRC regulations. Having collectives recognised more formally by the SRC would allow many of the problems that have arisen throughout this year to be resolved more easily by the Council and the Executive. This would require collectives to formulate constitutions and to create duty statements, and to have these recognised by the SRC regulations, along with a shared electoral policy. This would pave the way for collective autonomy to be recognised by the Council. Collectives are incredibly important to activism on campus, and making these policy changes would support the work of dedicated activists and prevent issues of stacking and non-consultative office-bearers misusing funds. A working group will be created to investigate the feasibility of these reforms – if you are interested in getting involved or have other feedback, please get in touch.

Motion: that the report of the Vice President be accepted.

Moved: Georgia Mantle

Seconded: Ilya Klauzner

The motion was put and **CARRIED.**

## **N. Report of the General Secretaries**

Georgia Mantle and Lachlan Ward tabled a written report

### **SSAF:**

SSAF negotiations are now finished. We have submitted our application for funding. We would like to commend the student reps from SUPRA, USU and the Cumberland Student Guild for being very open and cooperative in this process. The University has confirmed that they have received our application submission and have told us the deliberation will be occurring mid-April. We are awaiting their response to begin the process of producing our internal budget. Each collective/ department has been sent the Budget Application form. If you haven't received this please let us know as soon as possible so you have plenty of time to fill it out. The deadline for this application is the 22nd of April, please do your best to meet this deadline as the quicker we get the submissions the quicker we can finalise the budget. The internal budgeting allocations will be done in respect to those budget proposals but we are also happy to meet with any department and collective to discuss their proposals and answer any questions they may have in regards to the process.

### **SRC Bookshop:**

Will be spoken to.

### **NUS Education Conference:**

The SRC President and General Secretaries, were approached by the NUS Education Officer Max Murphy about hosting EdCon 2016 at USYD, mainly due to a lack of credible alternatives. We thought this would represent a good opportunity to engage with left groups on campus and to further the student education movement. As such the SRC has formally put in a bid to host the conference. It should be noted that this bid, will be used by NUS as a last result considering the opposition to this bid by the NEO as well as a bid from Flinders University in South Australia. In the circumstances that NUS chooses to grant us hosting rights, this would be on the precondition that NUS affiliation wouldn't rise as previously anticipated.

### **Expenditure Update**

| <b>REPRESENTATION</b>                 | <b>YTD 5.4.16</b>  |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
|                                       |                    |
| <b>President/Executive/Council</b>    |                    |
|                                       |                    |
| Shared Resource pool                  |                    |
| Expenses – Executive Officers         | \$ 1,876.62        |
| Legal Expenses                        |                    |
| <b>Subtotal</b>                       | <b>\$ 1,876.62</b> |
|                                       |                    |
| <b>Indigenous Students Department</b> | <b>\$ 210.00</b>   |
|                                       |                    |
| <b>Education Department</b>           |                    |
| Funding                               | \$ 6,459.23        |
|                                       |                    |
| <b>Environment Department</b>         | <b>\$ 229.02</b>   |
|                                       |                    |
| <b>Ethnic Affairs Department</b>      |                    |
| ACAR                                  | \$ 90.91           |
| CRAC                                  | \$ 427.71          |
|                                       | \$ 518.62          |
|                                       |                    |
| <b>Global Solidarity Department</b>   | <b>\$ 210.00</b>   |
|                                       |                    |
| Refugee Rights                        | \$ 645.00          |
|                                       |                    |
| <b>Overseas Students Department</b>   | <b>\$ 214.00</b>   |
|                                       |                    |
| <b>Queer Department</b>               | <b>\$ 70.83</b>    |
|                                       |                    |
| <b>Welfare Department</b>             | <b>\$ 275.82</b>   |

|                           |             |
|---------------------------|-------------|
|                           |             |
| <b>Women's Department</b> |             |
| Funding                   | \$ 1,584.95 |
|                           |             |
| <b>Social Justice</b>     | \$ 140.00   |
|                           |             |
| <b>Mature Age</b>         |             |
|                           |             |
| <b>Intercampus</b>        |             |
|                           |             |
| <b>Sexual Harassment</b>  | \$ 160.00   |
|                           |             |
| <b>Student Housing</b>    |             |
|                           |             |
| <b>Interfaith</b>         |             |
|                           |             |
| <b>Disabilities</b>       |             |
|                           |             |
| <b>Ethno Cultural</b>     | \$ 125.00   |

Georgia Mantle spoke to her report:

#### SRC Bookshop

- We had a very successful I meeting about the bookshop with the reassurance and a member of staff of the USU.
- We will continue to hold the place until next year and then they will be looking at someone who will pay the market value for that space, they will be helping us move it.
- We can't afford to pay the market rate, we do want to look into getting a new system, we are also looking at other ways we can improve this but we will not put profit above welfare but we would like to see less of a loss, we will not compromise on students welfare
- The EBA with the bookshop manager any changes will need to be changed with the consent of the worker it will expire in May 2017.
- I am very encouraged about our relationship with the USU and the bookshop.

#### Budgets

- Please keep an internal track of how you are spending.

Lachlan Ward: With SSAF and SUSF, we (collection of student organisations) deemed 23% of the contestable pool as reasonable they wanted 41% we deemed that unacceptable.



With the bookshop, in terms of buying and selling books we make a profit it's fixed costs that we struggle with.

Eleanor Morley: What is the increase of affiliation to NUS going to be?

Lachlan Ward: At the moment we are looking to increase NUS affiliation but we can't determine by what until we know our SAFF allocation.

Eleanor Morley: Does that mean were we to host EdCon it will not increase, because it will be an increase in the cost of hosting the conference?

Lachlan Ward: possibly, can't say till we have SSAFF

Chloe Rafferty: Disappointing about the bookshop, but I see you've been doing what we can. I am disappointed in the USU as they are more interested in profit than to helping students. This move could mean decreased resources for students and a shrinking of the activist spaces in the SRC.

Liam Carrigan: I can't comment on that because of a conflict of interest. My comment is with regards to NUS Education Conference I think that the SRC Education Department should have been consulted more and that it will be a huge ask to host EdCon.

Motion: that the report of the General Secretaries be accepted.

Moved:

Seconded:

The motion was put and **CARRIED**

#### **N1. Report of the Standing Legal Committee**

Minutes of the meeting of the Standing Legal Committee held on the 2016 were circulated.

Motion: that the minutes of the Standing Legal Committee meeting be accepted.

Motion: Lachlan Ward

Seconded: Ilya Klauzner

The motion was put and **CARRIED**

#### **O. Report of Committees and Officers**

##### **O1. Report of the Education Officers**

Dylan Griffiths and Liam Carrigan tabled a written report.

#### **REPORT**

March saw the continuation of a vibrant and active Education department with the first half of the month focused on the building of the restructure rally and the subsequent half preparing for the National Day of Action and discerning a response to the recently released strategic plan.

### **Restructure rally**

The Education Officers were exceptionally pleased and heartened by the great effort from on campus activists and groups in supporting and building the rally. We had stalls that were well supported, saturation parties that went off and saw delegations and building contributions from other departments such as Queer and International in both building and turnout for the rally.

The protest was vibrant and relatively well attended - a testament to the extremely consistent effort and hard work of the EAG. The implications of the restructure are not widely understood, so a successful start to what will be a long-term campaign for the EAG is an important win for the left on campus.

### **Meeting with Education and Social Work Dean**

The Education Officers touched base with the Education and Social Work Dean to discuss the staff response to the proposed merger and our plans to organise against it. The Dean highlighted that the faculty's response to the merger firmly opposed a merger. In conjunction with the unsuccessful petition by EDSOC this is a clear indication that consultation carried out by the University in preparation for the restructure has been purely symbolic.

### **Education and Social Work Forum and petition**

Dylan organised a forum to discuss the merger with students and staff that was also attended by the NTEU president. The department will be collaborating with EDSOC to continue to encourage these students to self organise against the merger. Dylan has also prepared a petition that will be circulated heavily throughout the faculty and delivered to the Vice Chancellor in order to continue to express student opposition to the merger. On Monday (04/04) the petition was taken to a 1<sup>st</sup> year education lecture and received 50+ signatures before the lecturer asked us to leave before commencing their lecture showing the interest of EDSW to oppose the faculty merger with FASS.

Dylan and Jack Whitney have begun workshopping a speak out against the merger in May.

### **SCA**

Over the student break Dylan, SUPRA, Alisha (USU) attended two meetings at SCA with some students and staff who are taking initiative on the changes to visual arts at USYD. This has translated into 'May the 4<sup>th</sup> (be with SCA)', a town hall style meeting being organized by the relevant unions, and a few independent staff and students.

### **Simple Extensions**

Thanks to some handy footwork from student representatives at Academic Board, simple extensions are now available in all faculties and should be communicated as such throughout the University.

### **NSW Education Organising and the National Day Action**

With the NDA the major demonstration following the restructure rally the EAG will be building the NDA over the next week. The media has been reporting on some particularly grim plans for higher education - lowering the higher education contribution repayment threshold, collecting debt from the dead and cutting funding to universities alongside a spike in student fees. It's estimated that this will increase student debt by 25%.

The NEO met prior to the break and on this Monday to organise the Sydney NDA. However, due to problems with national office we have lowered our expectations - rather than a rally we will be holding a speak out in opposition to the state of higher education in Australia. The EAG will be leafleting, holding a stall and contacting other organisations to promote the speak out - the first step in a yearlong campaign that will involve demonstrations against the budget and prior to the federal election.

### **Strategic plan**

The Education Officers were interviewed for an ABC article covering the strategic plan and were able to communicate clearly the student opposition to the restructure.

On April 1st we held a meeting to determine the EAG's response to the strategic plan. With the opening line that "If you change nothing, nothing will change", the report is unsurprisingly essentially a loose plan for the neoliberalisation and corporatisation of the University. Attacks to honours, four year degrees with a vertical degree structure and language that clearly signposts staff and course cuts all feature in the document. The EAG will in light of this continue to run the student campaign against the restructure and erosion of quality education - if you aren't doing so yet come along to the EAG to get involved!

Dylan Griffiths: I think it needs to be noted we just had a protest against the Howard Cup Adjudicator Simon Birmingham, the federal minister for education, at fisher library but we got kicked out by police and their ultra-violent method for removing people including hair pulling. I'd also like to Condemn David Hogan for condoning the actions of police and for hosting Simon Birmingham.

Liam Carrigan: There was a lot of violence directed at us and there was some extreme action taken against people.

Don't laugh this was a serious incident and that is disrespectful. We've seen a bunch of dangerous things taken to the budget by the government and we are going to need to look at what this budget is going to contain as it is going to be very bad and very scary for student's and will negatively effect a number of people especially women and low SES people.

Thank you for those who came to the protest.

Procedural motion to move to a vote

moved: Dylan Williams

Seconded: Michael Elliott

The procedural motion was put and **CARRIED**.

Motion: that the report of the Education Officers be accepted.

Motion: Georgia Mantle

Seconded: Isabella Brook

The motion was put and **CARRIED**

## **O2. Report of the Wom\*n's Officers**

### **Events**

**1. International Women's Day** – the Wom\*n's Collective and Wom\*n of Colour Collective held a joint picnic and sent a contingent to the IWD March on 8 March. This was a great opportunity for the two collectives to come together and attend the rally.

**2. Trans Day of Visibility** – In collaboration with members of QUAC, we painted a banner in support of trans and non-binary people in the Wom\*n's Collective ('Support Your Sisters, Not Just Your Cisters'). We also wrote a statement as a collective about why supporting trans women and non-binary folk is important as an intersectional feminist group, and shared this statement from the Wom\*n's Collective public Facebook page.

**3. Growing Strong launch** – on 22 March, we launched our annual publication, Growing Strong, at 107 Projects in Redfern. The night was really successful – we had a number of performances, as well as readings from people who contributed to the journal. It was a great opportunity to showcase the creative talent of people in the Wom\*n's Collective.

**4. Reading group** – we kicked off our reading group program for the year with a session on ecofeminism, co-hosted by the Australian Students Environmental Network at Jura Books. The session was very successful and I look forward to further peer education in the collective – wom\*n and non-binary folks are very welcome to join us at future sessions, keep an eye out on the public Facebook page.

### **Campaigns**

**1. Building for the NDA** – I am keen to get members of the Wom\*n's Collective engaged with the education movement and attending the upcoming NDA. In our collective meeting the day before the rally, we will paint a banner against deregulation and discuss how cuts to education funding affect women particularly.

**2. Sexual harassment campaign** – we learned last week that university management had organised a screening of the Hunting Ground without consulting or informing student representatives at all. This was surprising given our ongoing involvement in the Safer Communities Working Group. The aim of the Hunting Ground Australia Project is to engage staff and students in a discussion about sexual harassment and assault on campus, so it is extremely disappointing that the screening has been organised in secret and not advertised to students at all. It seems to be another PR stunt for the university to claim that they are working on the issue of sexual assault, without taking any real action. I am currently investigating this issue with university management and will work with the Hunting Ground Project to facilitate a student-organised screening later in the year.

**3. Deaths in custody** – I have been in touch with Shaun Harris, the uncle of Miss Dhu who died in custody in WA. Shaun is enthusiastic about the Wom\*n's Collective getting involved in his campaign against deaths in custody, and we are thinking about planning an event to build awareness about this issue.

### **Women of Colour Collective April Council Report**

Vanessa Song tabled a written report.

International Day against victim blaming took place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April with collaboration between the UNSW Women's Collective and the USYD Women of Colour Collective. International Day against victim blaming is an online day of action where survivors of sexual assault are encouraged to take up online space to protest sexual violence and victim blaming.

The Growing Strong launch took place on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March and was a huge success. With food, music and readings from Growing Strong, it was a great opportunity for everyone to read the publication and hear submissions from some of the contributors.

Working on liaising with the Autonomous Collective against Racism in developing a Race and sensitivity workshop, predicted to take place sometime toward the end of semester 1.

Women's Honi submission deadline is the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May; please contribute by sending pitches or pieces to [usydwomenscollective@gmail.com](mailto:usydwomenscollective@gmail.com)

The Women of Colour Collective held a meeting on the 4th of April to determine whether or not the collective had confidence, in me as an office bearer to continue. The motion proposed, for a vote of no confidence failed. The women of colour Facebook group will

undergo a two-month moratorium, until interested members volunteer to receive media training and training on bullying and harassment.

Motion: that the report of the Wom\*n's Officers be accepted.

Motion: Georgia Mantle

Seconded: Ilya Klauzner

The motion was put and **CARRIED**

### **03. Report of the Indigenous Officers**

Georgia Mantle gave a verbal report:

1. Indigenous Honi
  - a. General Update
  - b. Launch Party
  
2. Reconciliation Week Events
  - a. National Reconciliation Grant

Disappointed that last year it was over shadowed by vivid and blended together with very little consultation, hopefully that won't be repeated this year.

3. Equity, Diversity and Culture Working Group
  
4. Flag Poles

Yesterday I went on a walking tour to look for places for a flag pole to permanently carry the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, they need to check that they can put them there but as soon as they know their not like a water main or something there they should be at the end of Eastern Avenue near the Quadrangle.

Indigenous Games are coming up they are like Uni Games but for indigenous people. The University has got on board this year, which is exciting as this hasn't happened in the past, this means we can spend our budget on other things, as they Games have traditionally taken up a large percentage of our budget.

Motion: that the report of the Indigenous Officers be accepted.

Motion: Ilya Klauzner

Seconded: Harry Gregg

The motion was put and **CARRIED**

Procedural to move to agenda item O5.

Moved: Cameron Caccamo

Seconded: Eleanor Morley

The motion was put and CARRIED.

Dylan William voted against.

## **O5. Report Of Social Justice Officers**

Kim Murphy tabled a written report.

The social justice department has had a big focus on actions around refugees over the past few weeks. This has come in the wake of the government's decision to deport 267 refugees currently in Australia to offshore detention, and the emergence of the Let Them Stay campaign. I brought a Let Them Stay petition and banner to the social justice stall at o-week and leafleted for the Palm Sunday refugee rally. Also during o-week I helped organise a very successful protest that was an occupation of Malcolm Turnbull's office in Edgecliffe. Activists from USYD and UNSW marched into Turnbull's office and taped signed Let Them Stay petitions to the walls. The video of the occupation was widely liked and shared on the Let Them Stay campaign Facebook page. I'm also currently helping to organise a protest against immigration minister Peter Dutton for March 10th. Outside of refugee actions, I also leafleted and pestered for the rally against healthcare cuts and the government's privatisation of medical services in late February. I was also involved in a good action against Susan Ley the Health minister, where activists protested outside a Young Liberal event she was speaking at. On campus I've been continuing to leaflet and build for the Palm Sunday refugee rally, and I've also been attending EAG meetings. The corporatisation of university is a gross injustice to students so I've been quite active in the EAG's anti-restructure campaign. There are a lot of good actions planned for the near future that will continue the fight against social injustice on and off campus.

Kim added to the report the action of the government against safe schools was disgusting and we need to show support.

Motion: To accept the Report of the Social Justice Officer

Move: Matthew Campbell

Seconded: April Holcombe

The motion was put and **CARRIED**.

## **O6. Report Of Environment Officer**

Carried over from last council meeting:

The year has been an exciting one so far, lots of new members joined at O-Week, many members have been taking non-violent direct action in blockade camps up in the Leard & Pilliga NSW State forests against Coal mine expansion and coal seam gas extraction. Collective members have made strong relationships with the local Gamilaraay people in these northwest NSW communities, this has helped non-Indigenous collective members deepen their knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal connection to land as well as local history, culture, political concerns and experiences of corporate and government exploitation.

The collective is hosting a number of upcoming events on and off campus. This includes discussion forums (beginning this evening), potluck dinners with other NSW environment collectives and reading groups with UTS and UNSW. All these events are regular throughout semester, so as to improve collective environmental education, intersectional education and broader environment-movement, community-networking.

The collective is also working on collaborative educational events with other collectives on Radical Education Week, planned for week 5 second semester, as well as co-convening events with the USYD Community Garden and inviting speakers/building relationships with the Political Economy Society on anti-capitalist education.

The collective is also busy planning its mid-semester road trip to the Leard and Pilliga State forest blockade camps. Transport and logistics are also being sorted to send our collective members to the largest grassroots environmental conference in the country, the Students of Sustainability Conference which will take place in Brisbane during the Winter break.

Thanks for listening everyone, hope you all get to bed early :)  
Lily Matchett (co-OB for the environment)

This was received for this council meeting:

The last few weeks have been action packed; especially during the mid semester break when the Australian Student Environment Network took an environmental activist road trip to NW NSW. Seventeen of us had a educational tour of the world's largest coal port in Newcastle, the coal seam gas fields in the Pilliga forest and visited the Maules Creek coal mine blockade camp in the Leard State forest.

Students listened and learned at the frontline from local ecologists, community members, activists and scientists about the anti-coal and gas campaigns and the demolition of Aboriginal land, as well as the detrimental effects of these industries on flora, fauna, local industries and individuals' health and wellbeing.



Environment Collective members took a number of non-violent direct actions on this trip which led to the arrests of two collective members. One member prevented the production and processing of 6000 tonnes of coal by locking herself onto the coal conveyor belt at the Whitehaven Coal mine in Narrabri.

The collective is currently planning an activist training camp for the last weekend of this month, in which 8 workshops will be held over 2 days at a bush camp. The training camp will be a skill share that educates members further on non-violent direct action, collective organising, facilitation, political economy, Aboriginal solidarity, social media and tradition media training and theories of change.

Reading groups are continuing fortnightly, as are potluck dinners, and discussion forums are continuing every 3 weeks.

Thanks,

Lily Matchett  
Environment co-OB

Motion: To accept the Report of the Environment Officer

Move: Chloe Smith

Seconded: Lachlan Ward

The motion was put and **CARRIED.**

## **P. Special Business**

Suspension of Michael Sun

Liam Carrigan: Michael was at the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting but forgot to sign in, this is a human error, I would like to move a motion to remove the suspension

Seconded: Siobhan

Siobhan Ryan: He missed the meeting because he is involved in a lot of things and wasn't meeting

Dylan Williams: I think we need hold people to account and say that if they don't show up they should be dismissed.

Georgia Mantle: I think that if you sign up there should be held to coming, this was human error and they were here for the first meeting.

Lachlan Ward: Carrying on this, there are some people who apologise never come, I think that it's

unfair, that if there were issues with attendance across all meetings that would be fine, but this is unfair as it was human error and the suspension should be removed.

Procedural motion to move straight to a vote

Moved: April Holcombe

Seconded: Eleanor Morley

The procedural was put and **CARRIED.**

Motion to remove the suspension of Michael Sun

Moved: Liam Carrigan

Seconded: Siobhan Ryan

The motion was put and **CARRIED.**

## **Q. Motions of Notice**

### **Q1. Standing Up for Workers in Retail and Hospitality**

#### **Preamble**

Coles are currently facing a challenge to their 2015 enterprise agreement, which covers the pay and conditions of 77,000 workers. The agreement, which includes a massive reduction to penalty rates, sees workers earn substantially below the award rate for retail and leaves them up to \$140 worse off per week. This award was waved through with no complaint by the shop workers' union, the SDA, a right-wing union with a history of close collaboration with management, selling out workers and social conservatism. The SDA's national industrial officer, Matthew Galbraith, even admitted to not speaking to any Coles workers before waving the agreement through.

The challenge to this award was originally put by Duncan Hart, a part-time Coles worker, unionist and Socialist Alternative member. The meat workers union, the AMEIU, has also taken up the case against the award. The case is ongoing.

This is just one of countless cases of severe exploitation of retail workers around the country. Retail workers are overwhelmingly young people, with insecure jobs and often limited knowledge of their rights at work. This combined with the SDA's appalling deals with management means that retail workers are among the most exploited in the country. Many companies are even using Howard-era WorkChoices agreements to underpay their workers, such as in Hog's Breath Cafe, where it has recently emerged thanks to the work of SA member Melinda Joseph in Perth that workers for the company are receiving on average \$60 under the award a week. Recent revelations about the wages of international students working at 7/11 being as little as 47c an hour (!) show just how far bosses will go to exploit vulnerable workers. It is the duty of the SRC to stand up for workers, especially students in the workforce, of whom a large section work in retail.

## **Platform**

The SRC stands against the exploitation of workers at Coles, Hog's Breath Cafe, 7/11 and other retail outlets.

The SRC recognises that young workers, students (particularly international students) are especially susceptible to being exploited at work.

The SRC recognises that the class-collaborationist style of unionism practised by the SDA is not in the interests of workers and is unacceptable.

## **Action**

The SRC condemns the SDA leadership and demands that they fight against the 2015 enterprise agreement.

The SRC will materially support any campaign by retail workers to oppose enterprise agreements that would see them worse off

Kim murphy spoke to the motion speaking about the mistreatment of hospitality and retail workers. Kim Highlighted the SDA's complicity by not challenging the EBA that removed penalty rates and allows for the greater mistreatment and exploitation of workers.

Chloe Rafferty spoke to the motion sating that this incident reinforces the importance of joining your union, not only for protection but to hold the union to higher standards. Chloe was pleased that the motion called out the SDA and Coles for their disgusting deals, it important that young workers realise that they don't need to take the appalling treatment of bosses and can fight back.

Matthew Campbell spoke to the motion saying Coles makes billons of dollars a year, and in many of areas they have been doing this by pushing wages down. He added that it was disappointing that the SDA is not representing their workers, and it was disgusting that the SDA have shafted workers in the MWU and TWU to solidify the SDA's relationship with Coles. I urge everyone in this room to vote for this motion.

Michelle Picone spoke in favour of the motion stating that the unions are important and the constant attacks on workers mean we need to hold unions to account, without the unions being accountable the union movement can't grow.

Michael Elliott noted that a similar motion put to NUS and Socialist Alternative abstained, and wanted to know why their position has now changed?

Moved: Declan Maher

Seconded: Kim Murphy

The motion was put and **CARRIED**

## **Q2. Defend Safe Schools, Condemn Attacks by the Liberal Government**

### **Preamble:**

In February, an inquiry commenced into the Safe Schools program, a program designed to promote inclusive and safe environments for same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse students in Australian Schools. The “inquiry” was put forth by Malcolm Turnbull after accepting the bigoted comments put forth by Liberal backbenchers, who likened the program to “paedophile child grooming”.

The attacks on safe schools were congratulated by hate groups such as the Australian Christian Lobby (ACL), who are known for conservative lobbying surrounding the rights of same sex couples and gender diversity. The ACL deemed safe schools to be “rainbow ideology” and much like the Liberal backbenchers, expressed that the program is not age appropriate and sexually explicit.

The report, after much delay, was finally released to the public on 18 March. It found:

- A)** All resources created by the program organisers are age-appropriate in both primary and secondary schools.
- B)** All resources were effective in line with the program’s aims to reduce homophobia and transphobia in schools.
- C)** No stipulations were proposed regarding parental consent.

The report was the work of Bill Loudon, a Professor of Education at University of Western Australia, who was brought in as an independent party. This investigation itself was an attack on the program, but failed to find results which could undermine Safe Schools. Despite this, Education Minister Simon Birmingham has devised action points that completely disregard this report. His conclusions, which are described by Liberal backbenchers to be “gutting the program of concerning content” are ones not of an expert on education, but instead, are an attempt to push the bigoted agenda of the Liberal government.

Birmingham has concluded that Safe Schools is not age appropriate for primary schools and is to be designated to high schools only. This conclusion which is polar opposite to the findings of the report, deprives support for sexual and gender diversity for young people in formative years in their life. It also disregards statistics that say that homophobic bullying certainly happens in primary schools.

Role-playing activities and advocacy is to be removed from the program as well. These activities were seen to be the most effective in reducing bullying in schools, and has helped students develop empathy around experience of homophobia and transphobia. Safe

school's involvement in pro LGBTI advocacy helps LGBTI students feel empowered in a world where bigotry is enforced on them from their governments. Safe school's own research into their advocacy program has shown that participation in pro-LGBTI activism and protests is the most effective measure of all in reducing thoughts of suicide and self-harm.

The most dangerous of Birmingham's conclusions is the introduction of mandatory parental consent for the program. This puts the program at the hands of potentially bigoted parents who will deny their LGBTI children access to the program, perpetuating an unsafe environment in their school life as well as their home life. This will also allow homophobic and transphobic bullying to remain unchecked among young people who have adopted this bigotry from their parents.

These conclusions, coupled with an announcement to deny funding to the program after 2017, fit in directly with the Liberal government's attack on LGBTI people. The original funding for safe schools nationwide was \$8 million over four years, a miniscule amount in comparison to the chaplaincy program, a program that was championed by the Howard government which the Abbott government increased to \$243.8 million over four years.

Despite the Liberal government's conclusions, several healthcare organisations have come out in support for Safe Schools, including the Royal Children's Hospital Gender Service who say, "The answer to reducing these negative experiences is in the education of all children and adolescents".

An open letter in support of safe schools was signed by 17 Professors of Medicine, 120 doctors including paediatricians and psychiatrists as well as other health professionals and medical students. The letter stated: "As health professionals and students, we recognize the emergent need for such programs to not only respond to the specific needs of same sex attracted, gender diverse, intersex and questioning youth but to mitigate against victimization, violence, isolation, which can have a significant and enduring impact upon the health and wellbeing of young people."

A similar open letter was submitted by 362 academics representing 40 institutions Australia wide in support of Safe schools, which read: "This program is important in responding to the specific needs of same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse young people in schools. It is also important in creating more inclusive, supportive and safe schools where all young people can meet their education potential."

There has been an outcry from a number of parents with transgender kids in primary schools, who want the program reinstated and made compulsory for the wellbeing of their children. They explained that the safe schools program is a vital resource for young people and parents alike.

The general public have shown their outrage for the Liberal Government's conclusions, with thousands rallying across the country, showing support for Safe Schools and demanding "Safe schools everywhere".

**Platform:**

1. Sydney University SRC stands in support with the Safe Schools program, demand it be mandatory for all Primary and Secondary schools and demand funding be reinstated for the future of the program
2. The SRC regards the Liberal government's conclusions into the Safe Schools program as unqualified, and acknowledges that their conclusions are instead homophobic and trans phobic attacks, which the SRC condemns
3. The SRC condemns further attacks on Safe Schools by the Liberal government and hate groups such as the Australian Christian Lobby
4. The SRC stands for mass action against the attacks on Safe Schools, including protests

**Action:**

1. Sydney University SRC will endorse the upcoming protest against the Australian Christian Lobby at their conference on 23 April
2. The SRC calls on all office bearers, councillors and collective members to attend
3. The SRC, its office bearers and their collectives will share the Facebook event for the protest through all the Facebook pages they administer
4. The SRC will continue to support future protests regarding defending Safe Schools

Paul Boba spoke in favour of the motion explaining that the Safe Schools Program was attacked by the Liberal government backbenches, who suggested it was inappropriate and pornographic, there was a independent report conducted into the Safe Schools Program the findings were there was nothing wrong with the program. Despite this the government cut funding and implemented changes to the requirements of the program, making parental consent necessary to take part in the program. Paul noted that this was a dangerous clause as it prevented at risk children from being able to access the information they needed. Paul concluded by saying that there is a conference at the Australian Christian Lobby on the 23 April, and there will be a protest, Paul encouraged everyone to attend.

Evan Jones spoke to the motion as a part of the Queer Collective highlighting the need to protect the program and the support it offers students in high school.

Moved: April Holcombe

Seconded: Evan Jones

The motion was put and **CARRIED**

## **R. General Business**

Dylan Williams moved a motion from the floor:

### **R1. Bill Shorten will be the Next Prime Minister of Australia**

The Sydney University SRC endorses Bill Shorten of the great Australian Labor Party to be the next Prime Minister of Australia. The SRC condemns the Liberal National coalition for creating a political environment hostile to the union movement in Australia.

In addition, the SRC congratulates Labor on their lead in the latest Newspann, and acknowledges the work of thousands of grassroots activists and unionists who are fighting for the election of a Labor government.

Sean: I you are interested in getting rid of the liberal government you can see me about coming out to campaign in marginal seats

Dylan Williams: Bill Shorten will be a damn fine prime minister.

April Holcombe: It's interesting you would say that Bill Shorten is a friend of the unions considering his track record of stacking out militant unions. Labor is no friend of the working class.

Procedural motion to move straight to a vote

Moved: Dylan Williams

Seconded: Matthew Campbell

the motion was put and **CARRIED.**

Moved: Dylan Williams

Seconded: Sean Tingcombe

The motion put and **CARRIED.**

Dylan Griffiths moved a motion from the floor:

### **R2. Motion in Support of Flinders University NUS Education Conference Bid.**

#### **Council rejects the holding of Education Conference at Sydney University**

**Preamble:** The SRC should reject Education Conference being held at the University of Sydney or at the very least recommend that it only be held here unless Flinders University withdraws.

Education Conference was held in NSW last year at the University of New South Wales. It is inappropriate that it again be held at another GO8 University in the same state, when Sydney University has already held president summit here the past two years and NOWSA will be held at UTS. Flinders University is not a GO8 University and South Australia has had no major NUS events held at it in recent memory.

Additionally, activists and the SRC Education Officers, Council and Executive were not consulted over the decision. The NSW Education Organizing group passed the following motion:

“Motion: NEO supports the tender submitted by Flinders university to host the annual education conference. Flinders is a good option because it is non GO8 campus and the conference hasn’t been held in Adelaide since 2013. USyd should only be considered if there are no other options.”

Opposition has also been expressed in the EAG. With Radical Education Week in semester two, the department will be hard pressed to dedicate the appropriate energy for hosting a good conference in conjunction with NUS.

**Motion:** The SRC supports the tender submitted by Flinders University to host the annual education conference. Flinders is a good option because it is non-GO8 campus and the conference hasn’t been held in Adelaide since 2013. USyd should only be considered if there are no other options

**Actions:** The SRC directs the SRC president and NUS NSW President to ensure these concerns are relayed to the NUS executive

Dylan Griffiths: A lot of resources will need to be put into this and that there needs to be proper consideration taken into how this will effect he campaigns the EAG are already running and the amount of work already being done by the Education Officers.

April Holcombe: Dylan covered most of what I wanted to say, most events happen in Sydney and there should be a proper tender.



Eleanor Morley: The two concerns were that the tender was only \$5000 less than what has been offered for Sydney, but they have another \$5000 that can be put towards the conference. It was moved in the General Secretaries report that the funds would come out of intended increase in affiliation fees, I'm always for an increase in affiliation fees, and I'm appalled it went down last year. That the University [Flinders] has offered a shuttle us from the city to the campus for the conference. The Conference was held in Sydney last year it, the events NUS hold should be around the country to reflect that the education movement is around the country; it just seems like an event that is waiting to fail if held here.

Georgia Mantle: So when we were approached about this, in my role I deal with do we have the capacity and money, I said yes as we do have these means, I do accept that criticism to the lack of consultation

Lachlan Ward: I think the fact that the [Flinders] campus is so far away from the city is a bigger issue than it is being portrayed as. There are also the time constraints that we had with regards to consultation also, for when we looked at the tender, SUPRA and USU have suggested that they too would be interested in assisting with this.

Liam Carrigan: Ever since I head about this I've considered the capacity to run a conference. I think that NUS is it the best national body for building a national campaign. I really do see the arguments for having it here, but I do not think this has been a fair process for the people who will be doing the work. Dylan Griffiths and I work exceptionally hard, and it will be really hard to organise this in time. We should be building a national conference, every single event NUS is running will be in Sydney this year, there needs to be a national campaign and that needs a national outlook. I fully support NUS; I am a critical but proud member of the NUS.

Isabella Brook: I think there is also the aspect here that there is going to be a welfare day at EdCon and this will be a great opportunity to expand and make the welfare department more active.

Michael Elliott: Due to Flinders being a regional university students will need to catch a bus to the university from their accommodation, the cost of that will add up.

Chris Warren: NUS should try to engage with as many students as possible, I also think that with respect to talking public transport, it was being resolved with a shuttle? Real actives do take the bus.

Dylan Griffiths: I think that some of the arguments being raised as to why USyd should hold it are really flawed. The idea that we don't want to support a regional university getting involved in the education campaign is pretty offensive to Flinders, there was a big motion passed that we were putting our resources into the restructure campaign, I think we will need to note that there will not be many people not wanting to be involved in EdCon because we have more important other

campaigns. Our last holidays were very busy and I doubt that this will be any different. I think this could be detrimental.

Chloe Smith: I want to clarify the concerns over workload - the vast majority of the on campus work will be done by the President and the General Secretaries. The Education Officers should be involved of course, but you won't have to drop anything, the majority of it will be arranged by the President General Secretaries and National Executive of NUS.

Regardless of how you feel about it there is not a lot you can do tonight.

Justine Landis-Hanley: I think there are valid arguments on both sides but ultimately NUS should decide and that the NUS tender should go out.

Cameron Caccamo: For those who might be wondering "What is EdCon?" – Well it's a conference about the Education movement. I don't want new people not to know what we were going to be talking about. I don't mind if it is here I'll be drinking with mates, but probably won't go anyway. I see no reason to block our tender.

Dylan Williams: I also would really like to have the conference as the welfare officer, I think it would be a really good way to bulked the welfare department at USyd, and this give us an opportunity to do so. As Michael Elliott said the transport is a much bigger issue. We hold the NDA's here because more people come, we also don't hold them here to exclude them but because it is easier to get students here.

Christian Jones: I've been invited by the SRC to cohost, in terms of getting more activists - not excluding 30% of the students by including post graduates we will get more people involved than we would from holding it at a regional campus, I don't know why you wouldn't want it.

Chloe Rafferty: The main issue is the SRC has a lot on it's plate at the moment and is up to their student unions to put up some funding to help into this, I think it is more important of the exec threw their weight into organising the restructure movement. This isn't about attacking the union it is about telling them that we think it would b better if it was not held at USyd this year. The point of moving it around different universities is so more people can get involved in different areas.

Liam Carrigan: I'm happy for this to be a recommendation to the NUS national executive, but this is such an east cost centric union. That has been a big criticism of NUS in the past. What about the insane cost for those in other sates to get here over the \$3.50 bus fare? It's so USyd centric, they find it very hard how focused this state is on USyd, its unfair how much we focus the discourse on us, we need to engage the rest of the country. Why was supra contacted but not us [the Education Officers]? I'm really happy about the debate we've had today.

Robby Magyar: There are two tenders before NUS. There are a number of things that are happening around this time, there is NOWSA the week after [EdCon], and one for Indigenous students as well, a tender at USyd would allow students who are attending the other conferences to attend EdCon. There are also safety issues around transport and accommodation and this should be noted.

Procedural motion to move straight to a vote:

Moved: Lachlan Ward

Seconded: Ilya Klauzner

The procedural was put and **CARRIED**.

Moved: Dylan Griffiths

Seconded: April Holcombe

motion was put and **FAILED**.

#### **O4. Report Of NUS Delegates**

##### **NUS Report - Cameron Caccamo, USyd Delegate**

*Note: I sat with the National Independents during this Conference, and am a member of the NSW Greens.*

The National Union of Students National Conference 2015 was the third such conference I had attended. While the usual mix of walk-outs, shouting down of speakers, welfare concerns, undemocratic behaviour, and meetings running long into the night persisted, there were some genuine improvements at the 2015 conference over the past two years. I'll split this report up into three main sections: background, delegate behaviour, and policy.

##### **BACKGROUND**

The National Union of Students is the peak representative body for undergraduate students in Australia. The easiest way to explain the many aims and actions of the organisation is through a three-level approach: at a campus level, it can provide assistance and mentoring to new Office Bearers; at a state level, it can set up cross-campus action networks and run campaigns on particular state issues; on a national level, it represents student interests in Parliament after building successful national campaigns.

The structure of NUS somewhat mirrors what you'd expect from a representative organisation like our own SRC - there are Office Bearers that represent various groups of marginalised students, from Women's to Small and Regional students, along with the more general portfolios of Welfare and Education, with a President and General

Secretary as the leaders. A National Executive oversees it all, and State Branches with a similar OB structure (well, not from 2017...) implement state-based policy.

The National Conference sets the agenda for the following year, passing dozens of policies regarding stances on issues, and what campaigns can be run. A simple majority of the votes of delegates from affiliated universities (each with an amount of votes determined by the size of their university) is needed to pass these - in 2015 the breakdown of delegate factional alignment meant that Unity (Labor Right) and NLS (Labor Left) were the only two factions to make 50%+1 between them comfortably. Alternative alliances did exist - Unity, Liberals, and Socialist Alternative made over 50%, as did Unity, Liberals, and the National Independents.

## **BEHAVIOUR**

Even those new to student politics will easily be able to believe that a conference made up nearly two hundred student politicians will lend itself to questionable behaviour at some point. In fairness, 2015 was a far better year for most delegates than the previous two years; the police were never called (to my knowledge), nor were there any chants calling for the death of certain factions. That is not to say we were angels - far from it.

The most obvious case of poor behaviour - justified or otherwise, it was still a breach of conference rules - was the shouting down of several speakers due to the fact they were Liberals. Personally, I would've preferred to have them speak and have following speakers show them up, but it was clear that several groups in the room would not allow a Liberal to speak at conference. The two worst instances of this was when a Liberal woman attempted to speak to her own policy around childcare and a Palestinian Liberal attempted to speak on a motions surrounding Israel/Palestine. While many were vocal about their right to speak as elected delegates, many more were even more vocal about not letting them speak at all. I have purposefully not mentioned any factions or even individuals here, because, well, it's somewhat intuitively obvious, but also because laying blame for something like this doesn't particularly help. This doesn't seem like something that can just be easily fixed - again, conference rules were on the side of the speakers, so it seems that more rules won't just fix it up.

I said earlier it was a better conference - it was better for me and my group, perhaps, but members of other factions may tend to disagree. At numerous points, some delegates found themselves surrounded by other delegates attempting to question their policy stances. This was at its worst during motions around the major NUS campaign for the year, which was derided by many as a "Vote Labor" campaign. I'll get to that more when discussing policy, but it was quite clear that certain delegates were more than happy to

shout at other delegates during this discussion for their support of such a campaign. This led to certain factions deciding to walk out, due to the perceived toxicity of the room.

It hardly qualifies as “behaviour” but this is something worth mentioning. This conference was far better in terms of improper voting procedures, but the system still needs a lot of work. “Ballot Day” on the Thursday is shambolic to anyone that values any sense of democracy. Delegates receive their votes, go to their respective factional tables, drop them off, and their leaders fill them out and trade them with other factions. The proxy system, where delegates allow certain other conference attendees to pick up their votes for them, is ritually abused. I watched as a certain National Office Bearer pick up the votes for five delegates, waiting several hours as each vote (over 120 ballots for each of the twenty-plus contested votes) was counted and re-counted in front of them. I’m that the students represented by those delegates were proud that their representatives didn’t even pick up their votes, let alone vote themselves. At least that was an example where the delegates allowed for that, with the forging of proxy forms and votes picked up without permission having happened in the past. Voting reforms that would have seen an actual secret ballot system were not even discussed, let alone voted on.

Oh, and to the factions that left to go grab McDonalds during important policy chapters - not really a good look, guys.

Conference was respectful at times, to be sure, but keeping that sustained for three days seems beyond our collective capacity for the moment.

## **POLICY**

Before jumping into this, I’d again like to point out my “factional” affiliation, to the National Independents, and membership to the NSW Greens. I’m not going to pretend this colours how I view many of these issues, and would ask any readers of this report to read my analysis in that light.

There is always going to be some excellent policy passed at NatCon, as we’re bringing together the top student representatives from across the country specifically to write and pass motions coming from our collective experiences. I could spend a lot of time going through all of them, but realistically very little of it will get actioned as these policy areas have a single Office Bearer, only some of them are paid, and their ability to put these policies into action is severely limited.

Instead, let’s look at the more controversial ones, and what it means for 2016.

At all three of the conferences I have been to, the topic of Parallel Import Restrictions has come up. Originally a policy of the Liberals, the abolition of these protections on the book publishing industry has been picked up by Unity as a way to reduce the cost of textbooks. The other side of the argument is that it will destroy the Australian publishing industry if we allow foreign-printed textbooks to flood the market. Unity, backed by Liberals and some Independents, won the vote by a narrow margin - requiring a count of individual delegates to be clear of the result.

While it didn't happen at this conference, at previous conferences the motives behind the Unity change of policy were somewhat laid bare as they chanted "Down with Doug" - a reference to Federal NSW Labor Senator Doug Cameron, backed by the same Union that supports Parallel Import Restrictions, the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU). One speaker on the motion at the conference implored the conference not to play into the "wedge politics" of Labor and vote against the change in policy. While I'm not doubting that delegates that voted this up did so because they believe it is a way for more affordable textbooks, the context around such a policy cannot be ignored - especially when other potential ways of ensuring lower textbook costs, such as asking for more textbooks in Libraries, or opposing the monopoly of the Co-Op Bookshop, were relatively unexplored.

This was one of dozens of welfare policies passed by the Conference, which range from producing a cookbook to campaigning to reintroduce Start-Up Scholarships, but the only one to court such controversy. At the time of writing, it was the only visible campaign being run by NUS alone (except for building the NDA), and does not even mention PIRs by name.

A huge constitutional change also passed, that saw NUS' State Branches gutted of all but two positions. There will be, from 2017, no autonomous positions at a State level, with a representative from each affiliated campus joining a State President and State Vice-President Education on each State Branch. On the one hand, this does mean less organisers for campaigns affecting marginalised student groups. On the other, it means less positions for people to fill and do no work, which was, sadly, the norm.

Another controversial motion surrounded supporting a change in nomenclature for the Queer Department, with many delegates preferring "LGBTI". As a straight cis-male I'm not going to pretend that I should have any say in what name gets used, but it did provide for some of the most heated exchanges throughout the conference and the eventual change was not well received by many following the conference. This was not a constitutional change, so contrary to recent campaign branding the position is still named Queer Officer, but it may represent a potential broader shift in how student politicians approach the issue. I would advise Members of Council that are Queer/LGBTI

identifying, particular the Campus Office Bearers, to keep an eye on this discussion, in case any more permanent change is floated in the future.

There was one policy that was talked about throughout the conference that has significant ramifications for 2016 however - the aforementioned "We Are NUS/Vote Labor" Campaign. Again, the charge that it is a Vote Labor campaign came primarily from Socialist Alternative and Grassroots delegates, but it was known more as that than its actual name.

The criticism came from the actions of the policy being geared towards removing members of the current Federal Government by campaigning on five key issues that affect students... to be determined by National Office Bearers, not the Conference itself. These were the actions, taken straight from the policy book:

**Action:**

1. NUS will run a targeted seat campaign with the goal of removing the current federal liberal government and getting wins on key policy issues that affect students
2. To achieve this the campaign will involve door knocks and phone banks with volunteers and NUS Office Bearers, petitions, posters/billboards, rallies around the issues, an NUS scorecard for the different political parties, lobbying and working with the media
3. The NUS President and NUS Education Officer, in consultation with other nation office bearers, will choose the top 5 issues affecting students this coming election which will include deregulation of fees
4. These top 5 issues will become the key issues on which NUS campaigns.
5. NUS will research these issues and provide key statistics on why these issues are of concern to students
6. The NUS President will make sure that these statistics are compiled into a policy document to be distributed to all affiliated campus. This will include a script for discussing all these issues with voters particularly students and those with children who are/will be students

The implications of this are quite obvious; NUS wishes to organise and campaign in the Federal Election in a way that shuts out most delegates and campuses from having any say in how that campaign will run. The National President and National Education Officer are both members of NLS, and many of the other National Office Bearers are also NLS members - despite being roughly a quarter of conference floor, NLS can now almost

single-handedly set the tone for NUS' involvement in the Federal Election if they so wished.

Will this make it a "Vote Labor" campaign? Well, not necessarily - but the fact that it is being targeted in marginal seats (presumably Liberal-Labor marginals, one would hope) means that it'll effectively be a "Don't Vote Liberal" campaign where Labor is the only realistic other option. So...

Also worth noting is the demand that a scorecard for each political party and how well they represent students be created. In the past, these have consistently favoured Labor, with their poorer results with respect to the Greens (note: I'm a member of the Greens) being outweighed by Labor's "ability to create change". We will see if 2016 is any different.

## **THE YEAR AHEAD**

This year is an important one for the student movement. We've stopped fee deregulation for now, but with a significant chance of a Liberal re-election and many campuses focused on restructures and activism on their own campus, it is more important than ever to ensure NUS is strong enough to lead from the front nationally on Education issues.

A more active NUS is needed, and a more inclusive one too. Running campaigns that only very few students engage in, by policy or design, is not in the best interests of the organisation.

Also, National Conference desperately needs to be fixed. A candidate for General Secretary was able to point to dozens of breaches of regulations throughout the Conference, all before Ballot Day. We can't continue to have 3am, 4am finishes on the Wednesday night/Thursday morning because an agenda can't be set. I could speak for thousands more words on the problems of NatCon over my three experiences; it's time to see some of the solutions actually be considered instead of being ignored.

## **NUS Delegate Report – Michael Elliott**

To be elected as a delegate to NUS National Conference is an experience very few student activists have the privilege of experiencing. After being elected I set about writing policy with some of my fellow delegates from here at USyd and also from UTS. At conference I was responsible for Moving and Seconding ten policies. These ranged from support for penalty rates to better support for mental health on campuses to social



media engagement practices. I was very proud to see some of these policies adopted by national conference and become the policy of NUS.

One of the key ideas I pitched to students while running in the student elections here at Sydney was to campaign for the removal of Parallel Import Restrictions (PIR's) on university textbooks. The response I received was immensely positive, and to see the motion supporting this measure be adopted by the national conference was without a doubt one of the highlights of the week. Unions are at their strongest when they support their members, and with 1/3 of students living below the poverty line the adoption of this policy at a federal level would have significant influence on cost of living pressures for students.

On the final day of conference, I was elected by a 75% majority of delegates as the State Branch President of NSW. The position has been held by many people who have gone on to enjoy successful careers in politics and media, and I plan to give the role the honour it deserves. Since being elected I have organised O-Week campaign days and made several visits to campuses to assist in running these campaigns. My key goals for this year are to reach out to non-affiliate campuses to educate them on the benefits of getting involved in NUS, and to assist in the transition of the changing structure of the state branch, as per the constitutional reform passed at conference to abolish many of the smaller state branch officer positions.

The conduct of groups and individuals at NUS National Conference is something that is often discussed and scrutinised by student media and outside observers. 2015 conference was no different, with many altercations threatening to boil over into something more serious. It is disappointing that these grandiose attention seeking displays by individuals and/or groups garner more attention than what the other 95% of the conference involves; robust policy debate.

Media Observers from Honi Soit decried on Twitter and their live blog the quality of speeches, which I found to be elitist and disrespectful. Not everybody can be highly skilled and decorated debaters like some members of the current editorial team. Issues that affect the everyday lives of students and how best to address those issues were talked about with genuine passion. Nowhere else in this country is there such a diverse gathering of individuals coming together to share their ideas about how to help one another. Even if debate does sometimes degenerate into Punch & Judy style politics, most attendees are there because they genuinely care about students. If a forum like NUS National Conference was lost it would be a true tragedy, and student representation in this country would suffer for it.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Like hard-right euro-skeptics in Britain want to leave the European Union, some fringe dwellers who see nothing outside the often pretentious bubble of Sydney University sadly feel there is no purpose for a peak body which looks after a broad range of members. The University of Sydney SRC received over \$100,000 more in SSAF from 2014 to 2015. Despite this the previous Executive saw it fit to decrease NUS Accreditation by \$18,000. In a year where SSAF allocation to the SRC increased for any part of the budget to be cut is unjustifiable. I call on the current General Secretaries and President to **restore the \$18,000 that was cut by the previous administration**, and investigate the possibility of further increasing affiliation if SSAF allocation permits.

The SRC would benefit from **greater engagement with NUS campaigns and resources**. National and State Office Bearers exist for a reason, so don't be afraid to ask for their help on issues you might be dealing with in your capacity as a councilor or Office Bearer. As State President I am happy to offer any assistance in terms of campaign material or resources, or purely in advice.

Dylan Williams asked Michael Elliott if he had fun at the conference.

Michael Elliot said that he did.

Motion to accept the reports of the NUS Delegates

Moved: Dylan Williams

Seconded: Isabella Brook

The motion was put and **CARRIED**.

*The meeting closed at 8:31.*